

Great Southern Country Zone Minutes

22 August 2025

Hosted by the Shire of Ravensthorpe,
held at
Ravensthorpe Cultural Precinct
65 Morgans St, Ravensthorpe

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PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

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

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

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

The Chair, Cr Scott Crosby opened the meeting at 9:58am.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council
City of Albany	Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry Cr Lynn MacLaren (Deputy)
Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup	Cr Steve Penny (Observer)
Shire of Denmark	Cr Jackie Ormsby
Shire of Gnowangerup	President Cr Kate O'Keeffe Deputy President Cr Rebecca O'Meehan Ms Chiara Galbraith, A/CEO (non-voting)
Shire of Jerramungup	President Cr Joanne Iffla CEO Martin Cuthbert (non-voting)
Shire of Katanning	CEO Peter Klein (non-voting)
Shire of Kent	President Cr Kate Johnston Cr Scott Crosby, Zone Chair Deputy CEO David Bentley (non-voting)
Shire of Kojonup	President Cr Roger Bilney Deputy President Cr Cynthia Wieringa CEO Grant Thompson (non-voting)
Shire of Plantagenet	President, Cr Len Handasyde Deputy CEO Anthony Middleton (non-voting)
Shire of Ravensthorpe Deputy Delegate/s	President, Cr Tom Major Cr Rachel Gibson Cr Graham Richardson (Observer) CEO Matthew Bird (non-voting)
Shire of Woodanilling	President Cr Dale Douglas
GUESTS	
Members of Parliament	Nil
WALGA	Ms Coralie Claudio, Senior Policy Advisor Planning Mr Kieran McGovern, Policy Advisor Planning

1.3 APOLOGIES

City of Albany	Mayor Greg Stocks, Zone Deputy Chair CEO Andrew Sharpe (non-voting)
Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup	President Cr Michael White Deputy President Cr Doug Barritt CEO Karen Callaghan (non-voting)
Shire of Cranbrook	President Cr George Pollard Deputy President Cr Daisy Egerton-Warburton CEO Linda Gray (non-voting)
Shire of Denmark	Cr Dominic Youel CEO David King (non-voting)
Shire of Gnowangerup	CEO David Nicholson (non-voting)
Shire of Jerramungup	Deputy President Cr Julie Leenhouders
Shire of Katanning	President Cr Kristy D'Aprile Cr John Goodheart
Shire of Kent	CEO Christie Smith (non-voting)
Shire of Plantagenet	Deputy President, Cr Ken Clements CEO Julian Murphy (non-voting)
Shire of Ravensthorpe	Deputy President, Cr Mark Mudie
Shire of Woodanilling	Deputy President Cr Russel Thomson CEO Anika Serer (non-voting)
Roadwise	Ms Michelle Blackhurst, Regional Road Safety Adviser
CBH Group	Ms Kellie Todman, Manager – Government & Industry Relations
Great Southern Development Commission	Jarrad Garner, Acting Chief Executive Officer
Regional Development Australia – Great Southern WA Inc	Simon Lyas, Director, Regional Development
Members of Parliament	Mr Scott Leary MLA, Member for Albany Mr Peter Rundle, MLA, Member for Roe

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4 DEPUTATIONS / GUEST SPEAKERS

Nil.

Note: Lotterywest were scheduled to present at this meeting, however contacted the secretariat to advise that due to staff shortages are no longer able to attend a Zone meeting at this time. They have asked for the 2026 Zone Calendar when it is available and will look to attend a meeting in the future.

5 AGENCY REPORTS

5.1 GREAT SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (GSDC)

Nil

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

Report by Simon Lias, Director, Regional Development

1. Katanning Study Hub Update

The Katanning Study Hub opened in mid – March and is available to registered users 24/7. As of 12 August, there are 38 people registered, 70% studying at university, and 30% at TAFE. The majority are women in their 20's, 30's and 40's who are planning on re-entering the workforce, upskilling or finishing their current degrees.

Registration is free and more information is available here: gsunicentre.edu.au

The coordinator is Mr. Chris Stretch and the centre # 6374 7600 / 0499 367 115

2. Workforce Needs Survey

A Workforce Needs Assessment Survey in the Great Southern was last conducted in late-2022 / early-2023 to support the Great Southern DAMA business case.

The LGAs were instrumental in the distribution and promotion of the survey – which resulted in 108 responses representing a wide range of industries. The survey provided key insight on the workforce needs and shortages of the region.

RDA-GS is preparing a targeted workforce needs survey to gather a more updated snapshot of the region's current gaps and workforce needs in the region. The new survey has the support of the Dept of Training and Workforce Development and Jobs and Skills

Australia; and the survey data will be useful in ensuring a fit-for-purpose WA DAMA occupation list and inform regional job & skills planning strategies.

RDA would appreciate the assistance of LGAs to assist in the distribution of the survey which we will provide more detail soon.

3. One-on-One Consultations for Employers re. State DAMA and other employer sponsored skilled visa options

With the success of the one-on-one consultations for regional employers with the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Training and Workplace Development (February 2025), RDA-GS is collaborating on the next instalment of consultations in the later part of 2025. Please contact Renee Tan research@rdagreatsouthern.com.au to indicate your expressions of interest for this opportunity.

Noted

5.3 GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL ROADS GROUP

Report by Cr Len Handasyde, Shire of Plantagenet

- Tech working group will strengthen deliverability of all projects
- Sub-groups will meet in November and February
- Strengthened by regular reports by Main Roads
- Focus on pre-works, as smaller shires have less funding to get projects shovel ready
- Reserve projects will be encouraged in case funds fall over for initial projects, so there is no hold ups.
- 20% cap won't be affected by a Shire that is able to soak up extra funds (will break the cap)
- Projects that can't be delivered for an allowable reason will receive funds the following year
- Any further measures to encourage councils will be held over for a year
- If a Council does not advise early enough, funds will not be able to be acquitted.
- Thanked those involved in the Regional Roads group.

| Full report is provided as an attachment with the Minutes.

5.4 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY (LGIRS)

The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) August update report was attached with the Agenda.

| **Noted.**

5.5 WALGA ROADWISE

| *Report by Michelle Blackhurst, RoadWise Road Safety Advisor*

Nil.

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Tom Major
Seconded: President Cr Kate Johnson

That the Minutes of the Great Southern Country Zone meeting held on 20 June 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

6.1 Business Arising from the Minutes

6.1.1 Zone Submission – Draft Guideline on Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Projects

By Ms Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation, Minister Sanderson announced the release of the Draft Guideline on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects, seeking public consultation on the Guideline by 18 August 2025.

At the June 2025 Zone meeting, the Zone decided to form a Working Group to prepare a submission on behalf of the Zone. The Working Group comprised of:

President Cr Kate O'Keeffe
Deputy President Cr Doug Barritt
Karen Callaghan
President Cr Kristy D'Aprile
Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry
President Cr Roger Bilney
Grant Thompson
President, Cr Len Handasyde
Cr Scott Crosby, Zone Chair

The Zone Working Group met on Monday, 21 July and provided feedback, incorporated into a final draft circulated to Working Group Members on 15 August. The Zone's submission will have been submitted to Powering WA on Monday 18 August 2025, with the submission circulated to Zone Members prior to this meeting.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Roger Bilney
Seconded: Deputy President Cr Cynthia Wieringa

That the Great Southern Country Zone acknowledge how helpful Lyn Fogg and her team have been with assisting the Zone in preparing their submission.

CARRIED

6.2 ZONE RESOLUTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS STATUS REPORTS

6.2.1 Zone Status Report

By Ms Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

Attachment No. 1 [Zone Status Report August 2025](#)

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

6.2.2 Zone Action Items Report

By Ms Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

Attachment No. 2 [Zone Action Items Report August 2025](#)

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Len Handasyde

Seconded: Deputy President Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

That the Great Southern Country Zone NOTES the:

1. Status Report for August 2025, as detailed in Attachment No.2, and
2. Action Items Report for August 2025, as detailed in Attachment No.3.

CARRIED

7 ZONE BUSINESS

7.1 ZONE REPORTS

7.1.1 Zone Financial Report

By Mr Richard May, WALGA Finance Manager

Zone Financial Report for June 2025

(All amounts are excluding GST unless otherwise specified)

Financial statements for the zone have been prepared on an accrual basis and show the financial performance and financial position for the period ended **June 2025**.

Table 1: Statement of Income and Expenditure – period ended June 2025

Statement of Income and Expenditure as at Jun 2025			
	Note	Actual \$	Budget \$
Income			
Subscriptions	1	7,080	6,600
Other		-	
Total Income		7,080	6,600
Expenses			
Bank Fees		120	120
Meeting Costs (Catering)	2	3,517	5,000
Historical ATO Payment		165	
Total Expenses		3,802	5,120
Surplus/(Deficit)		\$3,278	\$1,480
Notes:			
1.	Subscriptions excl GST 11@ \$600 each, 1 @ 480. - Invoiced by WALGA on behalf of GSCZ - All fully paid.		
2.	Catering expense for zone meetings current year (Jerramungup - Aug '24, Katanning - Nov '24, Kent - Feb '25, Kojonup - Apr '25, Albany - Jun '25')		

Table 2: Balance Sheet presenting the Zone's financial position as at 30 June 2025

Balance Sheet as at 30 Jun 2025		
Assets		
Bank		7,710
Debtors		-
Total Assets	\$	7,710
Liabilities		
Creditors		-
GST Payable		-
Unused Project Funds		-
Total Liabilities		-
Net Assets	\$	7,710

Equity		
Members Funds B/F		4,432
Current year earnings		3,278
Total Equity	\$	7,710

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Kate Johnson
Seconded: President Cr Len Handasyde

That the Great Southern Country Zone receives the Zone Financial Report for June 2025.

CARRIED

7.1.2 Zone Budget and Zone Subscription Fees 2025/2026

By Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer

The Zone's closing balance as at 30 June 2025, is \$7,710, placing the Zone in a good financial position.

The Zone's actual expenses in 2024/2025 were limited to catering (\$3,517), Banking (\$120) and ATO payment (\$165).

Proposed Budget Allocations:

Meeting Costs (Catering): The Zone expended approximately \$720 on catering each meeting in 2024/2025. It is proposed to budget \$800 for catering each meeting in 2025/2026.

Zone Subscription Fees: The following table sets out a range of Zone Subscription Fees that, subject to the Zone's expenditure on meeting costs (catering), provide variable surplus (deficit) outcomes:

Subscription Fee	Total Income	Catering Cost	Surplus (Deficit)
\$600	\$7,200	\$4,000	\$3,200
\$500	\$6,000	\$4,000	\$2,000
\$400	\$4,800	\$4,000	(\$800)

A 2025/2026 subscription fee of \$500 is recommended, providing a \$2000 surplus, however, it is open to the Zone to adopt another subscription fee.

The following 2025/2026 budget is proposed:

Great Southern Country Zone Budget 2025/2026		
	Actual 2024/2025	Budget 2025/2026
Carried forward Equity	\$4,432	\$7,710
Income		
Subscriptions	\$7,080	\$6,000
Other		-
Total Income	\$7,080	\$6,000
Expenses		

Bank Fees	\$120	\$150
Meeting Costs (Catering)	\$3,517	\$4,000
Other	\$165	-
Total Expenditure	\$3,802	\$4,150
Surplus (Deficit)	\$7,710	\$9560

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Tom Major
 Seconded: President Cr Len Handasyde

That the Great Southern Country Zone, endorses:

1. 2025/2026 Annual Subscription Fee of \$500 per Zone Member Local Government; and
2. 2025/2026 Zone Budget as shown.

CARRIED

7.1.3 Zone Chairperson's Report

Cr Scott Crosby, Zone Chairperson

Nil to report.

7.2 ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Nil to report.

7.3 MATTERS FOR ZONE NOTING AND DECISION

7.3.1 2025 WALGA Honours Recipients

Chantelle O'Brien, Zones Governance Officer

BACKGROUND

WALGA celebrated their 2025 Honours awards recipients at an event on Saturday, 19 July at the WA Museum Boola Bardip. Following the success of the inaugural standalone event last year, the awards night was held solely to acknowledge and appreciate the extraordinary efforts of Elected Members and Local Government Officers in service of their Local Government, the sector and the community.

There were 44 recipients of Honours awards in the 2025 program. Two new WALGA Life Members were also inducted.

One Honours recipient was from the Great Southern Country Zone:

Cr Elizabeth (Liz) Guidera Shire of Katanning WALGA Life Membership

Congratulations to all Honours recipients!

Nominations for the 2026 Honours Program will open early next year.

Noted

7.3.2 Shire of Gnowangerup and Shire of Katanning, WALGA Climate Declaration

By Connor Warn, Policy Advisor - Environment

BACKGROUND

The WALGA [Climate Change Declaration](#) provides one way for Councils to demonstrate a commitment to climate action through localised mitigation and adaptation initiatives achievable to their Local Government.

The Shire of Gnowangerup and Shire of Katanning represent the 61st and 62nd Local Governments to sign the WALGA climate change declaration.

The Shire of Gnowangerup's pledge include demonstrating climate leadership, partnering with other Local Governments and monitoring the impacts of climate change and addressing the challenges generated by climate change.

The Shire of Katanning pledge includes partnering with neighbouring Local Governments to enhance non-potable water supplies for parks, firefighting and emergency stock water. Other commitments include redesigning open spaces using waterwise principles, reducing bushfire risk through fuel load management, expanding urban canopy in pedestrian areas, installing solar panels on Local Government buildings and maintaining a fit-for-purpose evacuation centre.

Feedback from WALGA's climate surveys indicates Local Governments are seeking support in delivering on-ground action for their communities.

There are a [range of options](#) available for Local Governments to take climate action, including through signing a WALGA Climate Declaration. Signing the declaration supports WALGA in its advocacy efforts to the Australian and State Governments for improved policy outcomes and increased resourcing and funding.

Under its formal declaration, the Shire of Gnowangerup:

- Recognises that climate change is occurring, and that climate change will continue to have a significant effect on the Western Australia environment, society and economy.
- Acknowledges the central role of Local Government in driving a successful climate response. Hence, declares commitment to the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies to minimise the effects on our community, environment and economy.
- Seeks to implement the overall objectives of:
 - demonstrating climate leadership; and
 - building the resilience of our Shire to the effects of climate change by partnering with neighbouring Shires to lever scale and accelerate the planning and implementation of relevant initiatives.

Under its formal declaration, the Shire of Katanning:

- Recognises that climate change is having a significant impact on the Shire, evidenced by rising temperatures, longer and hotter heatwaves, reduced cool-season rainfall, more frequent and intense droughts, increased fire danger days and biodiversity loss.
- Acknowledges the environmental, social, and economic benefits available to Local Governments that take action to address climate change and the importance of State and Commonwealth strategies for climate management to accelerate community benefits.

- Declares its commitment to demonstrating climate leadership and building resilience by partnering with neighbouring Shires to lever scale and accelerate the planning and implementation of relevant initiatives, including:
 - Enhancing non-potable water supplies for parks and gardens, firefighting, and emergency stock water.
 - Reducing non-potable water demand through waterwise design of new and existing open spaces.
 - Reducing bushfire risk by managing fuel loads in Shire-controlled reserves.
 - Enhancing the urban tree canopy in high pedestrian areas.
 - Installing solar panels on additional Council buildings.
 - Maintaining a fit-for-purpose evacuation centre.

WALGA commends both Shires for Signing the Climate Declaration and will support the Shires in its efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change.

As formal recognition for making a Declaration, WALGA presents both Shires with a framed copy of the Declaration with a summary of the key actions listed in their Climate Declaration.

Noted

7.3.3 Zone Experience Survey Feedback

Chantelle O'Brien, Zones Governance Officer

BACKGROUND

On 15 July a Zone Experience Survey was distributed to all WALGA-administered Zones. The audience captured in the survey were Delegates, Deputy Delegates, CEOs and Local Government staff that provide support to Delegates and CEOs.

The secretariat would like to thank everyone that completed the survey, which resulted in an impressive 136 responses received and 77 comments across all Zones.

In summary, we are pleased to report that survey participants were generally very satisfied with how Zone meetings are coordinated. This included satisfaction with the timeliness of receiving Zone meeting papers, the format and contents of meeting papers, the communication of meeting schedules and updates, and overall support provided by the WALGA secretariat.

The comments received from survey participants were also generally positive, with many proposing possible process changes. These comments will be carefully considered and where possible, used to guide improvements to current processes.

It is proposed that this survey will be distributed on a 2-year basis so that continuous improvements can be made (next survey in late 2027). This will coincide with Zone Delegate membership terms.

Thank you again for your contributions and commitment to the betterment of our Zones process.

Noted

7.3.4 Rating Mining Miscellaneous Licenses

Cr Scott Crosby, Zone Chair

BACKGROUND

In July the Supreme Court overturned a decision of the WA State Administrative Tribunal, with effect that Miscellaneous Mining Licenses are determined as rateable property.

Miscellaneous Licenses are typically used alongside mining or exploration tenure, to facilitate infrastructure, roads, aerodromes, pipelines and worker accommodation to support mining activities.

This decision reinforces the Local Government Act provisions that all land in Western Australia is rateable, subject to prescribed exceptions aligned with charitable, benevolent, religious and public or civic purpose land uses. There is already a rate exemption for small prospecting leases under 10ha and unoccupied Miscellaneous License.

However, the Minister for Local Government, Hannah Beazley MLA announces on 2 August 2025, that the State Government would amend the Local Government Act to clarify land held under a miscellaneous licence is exempt from Local Government rates.

WALGA's State President has provided media statements and undertaken advocacy to the Minister for Local Government, strongly advocating against the State Government's proposal to provide a rate exemption for Miscellaneous Licenses, on the basis that:

- State Government through the proposal is putting commercial and industry interests above those of regional communities.
- Mining companies should be appropriately rated in the same way as any other commercial enterprise and residential households.
- Mining activities have a significant impact on upkeep of local roads and should contribute to these costs through rates.
- Mining rates are a pre-tax business expense to mining companies, unlike all other Western Australians who pay residential land rates out of their own after-tax income.
- It is an extraordinary step by State Government to seek to introduce legislation to undermine a Supreme Court decision.
- The State Government's proposal erodes the services and support that can be provided to regional communities.

The WA Electoral Commission (WAEC) wrote to all CEOs by email on 14 August 2025 advising:

The WAEC has recently reviewed how we deliver information about the election process to candidates. This has identified that our previous practice of relying on in person briefings has meant that LGA's and potential candidates have had varied experience with regard to the presentation and information provided. Not all potential candidates attend these sessions and so do not receive the information provided.

We are also concerned that there have been some changes to regulations and processes for this year's elections and ROs have not yet completed their training.

For LGE 2025 we have decided that ROs are not attending LGA information sessions. This decision is to ensure consistency and equity for all potential candidates across all LGAs.

Instead, we are offering potential candidates a presentation on our website. Candidates will be able to watch a video at a time of their choosing and watch it as often as they require. The website will also include common questions and answers and candidates will have the ability to lodge an online query. This will be available from early next week.

Following the close of nominations, ROs will be available to work one on one with candidates to assist them with any specific issues they have through the process.

The WAEC's reasoning for this change is questionable, and the impact on local Candidate Briefings is significant, particularly where a Local Government has been assigned the same experienced Returning Officer for a number of elections, who has in previous elections presented candidate briefings, as is the case for Albany.

On a separate but related matter, during a Teams meeting last week the WAEC advised the City of Albany of a significant reduction in WAEC staff for the election count compared to the 2023 election, from 56 to about half that number, however the WAEC fee has not been reduced commensurately. Compared to the 2021, which was just a Councillor election, similar to the 2025 election, the fee has increased 53%! The fee is about 6% lower than the 2023 election however that was a Mayor & Councillor election.

Following the 2023 election and the introduction of Optional Preferential voting the sector provided VERY strong feedback to the WAEC arising from the WAEC's poor administration of and direction to Returning Officers regarding the method of the count, declaration of results and significantly increased costs to Local Governments.

The City of Albany is very concerned how this reduction in count staff will affect the count on the night not just because of the reduction in staff locally but also the experience of WAEC officials in the WAEC Count centre in Perth given issues that were highlighted in the recently tabled Special Inquiry into the Planning and Delivery of the 2025 Western Australian State Election.

The City of Albany is concerned for all Local Governments re how efficiently the 2025 Local Governments will be conducted and continuing increase in costs to Local Governments without an improvement in service levels from the WAEC.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry

Seconded: President Cr Kate O'Keeffe

That the Great Southern Zone:

1. EXPRESSES its concern to State Council regarding the WAEC's decision to not allow Returning Officers to attend Candidate Information Sessions and reduction in service levels without commensurate reduction in fees charged to Local Governments to conduct the upcoming Local Government elections in October 2025.
2. REQUESTS that WALGA make representation to the Minister for Electoral Affairs, Hon. David Michael MLA, to ensure that the smooth and efficient running of the 2025 Local Government elections.

CARRIED

8 WALGA STATE COUNCIL BUSINESS

8.1 ZONE STATE COUNCIL MEMBER REPORT

Cr Scott Crosby, Zone State Councillor

Cr Scott Crosby provided an update to the Zone.

9 WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA

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

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

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

9.1 STATE COUNCIL MATTERS FOR DECISION

9.1.1 Rating of Renewable Energy Facilities (State Council Agenda Item 8.1)

By Kirsty Martin, Manager Commercial Management and Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA Members have expressed uncertainty in the rating of large-scale renewable energy facilities across the State which was confirmed through a resolution of the Peel Country Zone Meeting in April 2025.

- In response to the uncertainty, WALGA engaged Paxon Consulting Group to review the rating mechanisms available for Local Governments to recover costs associated with large scale renewable energy projects.
- The purpose of the review was to examine the current legislative framework, undertake a review across other Australian jurisdictions in respect to who rating for such facilities is managed, and provide recommendations for the rating of these facilities in Western Australia, including any required amendments to legislation.
- The Final Report outlined seven Key Findings which confirmed that legislative change would be required to enable Local Governments to rate renewable energy facilities with certainty.

ATTACHMENT

- [Local Government Rating of Renewable Energy Facilities Report](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to WALGA's Strategic Pillars of Influence, Support and Expertise.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There is no current advocacy position for the rating of large-scale renewable energy facilities. Endorsement of this item will enable the establishment of a position.

BACKGROUND

Western Australia's energy industry is transforming to achieve the goal of net zero emissions by 2050. Project proponents are active in many rural, remote and regional areas, seeking to develop renewable energy projects.

The placement, management and impact of renewable energy facilities have become contentious issues nationally and in local communities across Western Australia. Concerns have been raised regarding:

- the location of these facilities on agricultural land,
- the suitability of regulatory frameworks to ensure local communities benefit from the investment,
- the inability of the planning framework to manage on and off-site impacts of proposals, and impact on agricultural land use.

There have been an increasing number of conversations around compensation and cost recovery for those communities housing large scale renewable energy projects. Compensation is typically done through some sort of community benefits arrangement and WALGA has recently developed a Renewable Energy Community Benefits and Engagement Guide to assist WA Local Governments navigate discussions with developers and their communities.

The ability for Local Governments to recover costs (ie road maintenance, additional services used etc) incurred as part of the roll out of large-scale renewable energy projects is equally important. There is a lack of clarity around the best mechanism for achieving cost recovery and Local Governments have been seeking clarification on the applicable land value rating method of these facilities and how best to approach this going forward.

In response to this, WALGA engaged Paxon Consulting Group (Paxon) to review the rating mechanisms currently available to Local Governments to recover costs and provide advice on whether amendments to legislation are required to ensure Local Governments are able to equitably and fairly rate renewable energy facilities. Paxon also undertook a review of other Australian jurisdictions and existing case law to determine the rating options available to Western Australian Local Governments.

The Key Findings of the report are outlined below:

1. Under the current legislative framework, there is no clear method that allows WA Local Governments to impose rates on renewable energy facilities in their area, with certainty.
2. Each rating option considered in this report would require some legislative change to become a more certain and reliable avenue for Local Governments in the rating of renewable energy facilities.
3. In each case, the legislative change could be achieved with fairly 'blunt' legislative amendments – that is, introduction of a new standalone provision (or set of standalone provisions), and minimal amendments required to existing legislation.
4. Any legislative amendments to tighten the rating approach and/or introduce PiLoR should not (in principle) need to be extensive or overly complex.
5. With the PiLoR framework in particular – whilst this may involve more substantial legislative drafting (given that a new framework is needed), if the Victorian model was to be generally followed, this framework would be relatively straightforward and self-contained. This makes it arguably a 'cleaner' approach than the other options, as a (mostly) standalone mechanism – and a clear process – that has minimal interference with existing rate setting processes. Of course, practical matters, namely reaching political alignment on the specifics of the mechanism (especially methodology) and the roll-out / application, may instead give rise to challenges.
6. On all the options considered, the exact nature of the amendments should be determined by which approach or position will be most palatable from a political and policy perspective. For example, whilst WA Local Governments may wish to avoid the time and uncertainty involved with a Ministerial determination / approval on any matters, it is unlikely that it can be avoided entirely (in which case the amendments would need to capture whatever approval rights would sit with the Minister).
7. Finally, if different options or permutations of rating options are used for different types of renewable energy assets, this would create another layer of legislative complexity and increase the scale of changes required.

The options for rating, including the advantages, limitations and ranking of each, are detailed in the Report. The rating options are ranked as follows:

1. PiLoR Framework
2. Differential Rating based on UV with no ratio limit
3. GRV Rating
4. Differential Rating based on GRV with no ratio limit

Although the PiLoR framework is more complex to implement, it is ranked first as it enables Local Governments to fairly and equitably rate renewable energy facilities through a cleaner, mostly standalone rating mechanism, bespoke to renewable energy assets, which is understood and accepted by the renewable energy sector.

The ability to apply a higher and uncapped differential rate determined by the Local Government is ranked second. This option is favoured over both the GRV options, as unlike the GRV options, this option does not require a valuation and is suitable for all renewable asset types.

The Report recommends the following:

1. WALGA to endorse support for the adoption of the PiLoR framework approach to the rating of renewable energy facilities.
2. WALGA to make representation to both the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety and the Department of Energy and Economic Diversification on the merits of the PiLoR framework.

3. WALGA to advocate for legislation amendment to enable WA Local Government to negotiate annual contributions with renewable energy proponents in lieu of rates.
4. WALGA should advocate to State Government to ensure any funds received through a potential community benefit arrangement are clearly identified as separate from the annual rates contributions.

COMMENT

WALGA acknowledges that even though the adoption of the PiLoR framework is the preferred option in the Report, it is also a more substantial change requiring the development of an entirely new framework across multiple State Government agencies.

This is likely to be a longer-term option and as such WALGA will advocate for this in parallel to the above legislative amendments. The adoption of a PiLoR framework in Western Australia would require a new legislative section(s) setting out:

- the legislative ability for an annual payment in lieu of rates;
- which land the process can apply to – noting in Victoria, it's land 'predominantly used' for the generation of electricity;
- the process for determining the quantum of the payment – ideally with a payment calculation methodology, at least as a 'fall back';
- a third-party dispute resolution process; and
- any exemptions.

As identified in the Report, amendment to the current legislation pertaining to Local Government rating, is the most straightforward option. As such, WALGA will advocate for the following changes:

GRV Rating

For example, a new section to the effect that:

- if land has any renewable energy (RE) assets, the Minister will determine that the method of valuation is GRV for either the entire property, or the portion of (or lot(s) within) the property with RE assets, irrespective of the existing methodologies in the *Local Government Act 1995* (LG Act);
- when calculating the GRV under the *Valuation Land Act 1978* (VL Act), works effected to the land and items affixed to the land (including turbines, towers, masts and monitoring systems, panels, buildings, substations and connection points, roads, fencing, foundations cabling / connectors etc), are improvements, irrespective of whether above ground or underground, and irrespective of who owns the items.

Differential Rating (UV)

- A new section of the LG Act to the effect that the Minister's approval is not required where the (higher) differential rating category relates to land with RE Assets.
- This could / would be accompanied by a subsection with conditions or parameters on the setting of a higher differential rate, or requirement for compliance with a subsidiary document that contained such parameters.
- If the public consultation process (in s 6.36 of the LG Act) was to be removed or pared back for land with RE Assets, a new subsection in the LG Act would be required, to the effect that the process either did not need to be followed for this category, or setting out a more limited way in which it would apply.

Differential Rating (GRV)

As per legislative changes required under the GRV Rating and Differential Rating (UV) Options.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA advocate to the State Government for:

1. Legislative amendments to enable WA Local Governments to rate large-scale renewable energy facilities using current rating mechanisms (differential rating based on UV, differential rating based on GRV, or GRV alone) with certainty.
2. A commitment to implement a Payment in Lieu of Rates (PiLoR) framework in Western Australia.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Len Handasyde

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.1 as contained in the State Council Agenda, subject to the following change to point 2:

That WALGA advocate to the State Government for:

1. Legislative amendments to enable WA Local Governments to rate large-scale renewable energy facilities using current rating mechanisms (differential rating based on UV, differential rating based on GRV, or GRV alone) with certainty.
2. Priority to be given to uncapped GRV rating mechanism over the differential rating based on UV.

THE AMENDMENT WAS PUT AND CARRIED

9.1.2 Rating of Miscellaneous Licences (State Council Agenda Item 8.2)

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Under section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, all land is rateable unless specifically exempted.
- In a State Administrative Tribunal decision of 2024, it was determined that Crown land the subject of an occupied miscellaneous licence was non-rateable.
- Subsequently, the Shire of Mt Magnet appealed this decision to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled that Crown land subject to a miscellaneous licence and occupied is rateable, overturning the State Administrative Tribunal decision.
- This ruling affirmed the principle that Local Governments may levy rates on such land, recognising the significant infrastructure and occupation associated with these licences.
- On 2 August 2025, the WA State Government announced its intention to legislate amendments to the *Local Government Act 1995* to exempt land under miscellaneous licences from rating.
- WALGA has been advocating for Local Governments to have the ability to rate these licences and a formal advocacy position is required.
- WALGA is seeking support from the WA Parliament for the appropriate committee to review the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently prescribed under section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

ATTACHMENT

- Supreme Court decision, [Shire of Mt Magnet v Atlantic Vanadium Pty Ltd \[2025\] WASC 274](#)
- [Ministers media release](#)
- [WALGA's media release](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to WALGA's Strategic Pillars: Influence, Support and Expertise.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There is no specific advocacy position relating to miscellaneous licences. Endorsement of this item will enable the establishment of a position.

Current advocacy position 2.1.1 relates generally to Rating Exemptions Review:

Position Statement	<i>A broad review be conducted into the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently prescribed under section 6.26 of the Local Government Act 1995.</i>
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BACKGROUND

Local Governments in Western Australia rely on property rates as a primary source of revenue to fund essential services and infrastructure. Under section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, all land is rateable unless specifically exempted. Historically, exemptions have applied to land used for charitable, benevolent, religious, or public purposes, as well as small prospecting leases under 10 hectares and unoccupied miscellaneous licences.

A miscellaneous licence under the *Mining Act 1978* and the Mining Regulations 1981 (WA) sets out the purposes a miscellaneous licence may be granted for:

(a) a road; (b) a tramway; (c) an aerial rope way; (d) a pipeline; (e) a power line; (f) a conveyor system; (g) a tunnel; (h) a bridge; (i) taking water; (ia) a search for groundwater; (i) hydraulic reclamation and transport of tailings; (j) an aerodrome; (k) a meteorological station; (l) a sulphur dioxide monitoring station; (m) a communications facility; (n) a drainage channel; (o) a pump station; (p) a minesite accommodation facility; (q) a bore; (r) a bore field; (s) a water management facility; (t) a power generation and transmission facility; (u) a storage or transportation facility for minerals or mineral concentrate; (v) a minesite administration facility; [2025] (w) a workshop and storage facility; (x) a jetty.

In 2024, the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) determined that land under a miscellaneous licence was exempt regardless of occupation.

On an appeal from the Shire of Mt Magnet, in July 2025 the Supreme Court of Western Australia ruled that Crown land subject to a miscellaneous licence and occupied is rateable, overturning a previous SAT decision. This ruling affirmed the principle that Local Governments may levy rates on such land, recognizing the significant infrastructure and occupation associated with these licences.

However, the State Government has announced its intention to legislate amendments to the *Local Government Act 1995* to exempt land under miscellaneous licences from rating, citing the need to protect jobs and provide certainty to the mining sector.

WALGA has been advocating strongly for Local Governments to have the ability to rate these licences, however it is appropriate for State Council to endorse a formal position, aligning with existing advocacy position 2.1.1.

KEY ISSUES

- Equity and Fairness: Miscellaneous licences often support substantial infrastructure (e.g. roads, pipelines, bore fields, accommodation) that places demands on local services. Exempting such land from rates shifts the financial burden to residents and small businesses.
- Legal Precedent: The Supreme Court decision provides a clear legal interpretation that supports Local Governments' ability to rate occupied land under miscellaneous licences.
- Community Impact: Local Governments maintain infrastructure and services that benefit mining operations. Rates are a fair mechanism for mining companies to contribute to the communities they operate in.
- State Government Proposal: The proposed legislative change undermines the Supreme Court's decision and WALGA's advocacy for financial sustainability and fairness in rating practices.

COMMENT

WALGA strongly supports the Supreme Court's interpretation and opposes the State Government's proposed amendments. The Association maintains that:

- Occupied land under miscellaneous licences should be rateable.
- Mining companies should contribute to local communities through rates, just as other property owners do.
- Legislative changes should not override judicial decisions that promote equity and sustainability.

WALGA has advocated strongly on this issue following the State Governments announcement to legislate for a rating exemption for miscellaneous licences.

The following is a summary of WALGA's recent advocacy on this issue:

Thursday, 10 July 2025

- WALGA media statement – [Supreme Court decision supports critical role of Local Government](#)
- ABC Drive, [interview with Geraldine Mellet](#)

Saturday, 2 August 2025

- WALGA media statement - [WALGA condemns State Government move to legislate against Supreme Court decision](#)
- The West Australian, Rebecca Le May - [WA Local Government Association hits back as State Government shields miners from land rates](#)

Sunday, 3 August 2025

- The Sunday Times (pg. 5), Rebecca Le May – “Councils’ fury over mining land rates’

Monday, 4 August

- ABC News online, Chloe Henville - [“Move to exempt miners from paying rates on miscellaneous licenses 'concerning'”](#)
- ABC Mornings with Nadia Mitsopoulos – [“WALGA president Karen Chappel and AMEC CEO Warren Pearce discuss the State Government plan to prevent councils levying rates on miscellaneous licences”](#)

- 7 Regional News, Brandon Demura - ["State Government accused of re-writing rulebook for WA Councils"](#)
- ABC News Perth, Blake Kagi - ["Local Governments condemn State Government move"](#)

It is recommended that WALGA advocate for Local Governments to continue to have the ability to rate miscellaneous licences under the *Mining Act 1978*, and to oppose legislative amendments that seek to exempt occupied miscellaneous licence land from rating. In addition, continue to advocate that a broad review be conducted into the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently prescribed under section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

1. Advocate for Local Governments to continue to have the ability to rate miscellaneous licences under the *Mining Act 1978*, and
2. Oppose legislative amendments that seek to exempt occupied miscellaneous licence land from rating.
3. Continue to advocate for a broad review to be conducted into the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently prescribed under section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Lynn MacLaren

Seconded: President Cr Joanne Iffla

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

CARRIED

9.1.3 Community Infrastructure and Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund Advocacy Positions (State Council Agenda Item 8.3)

By Rebecca Hicks, Policy Officer Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Following a review of WALGA's Investing in Communities advocacy positions it is proposed that Advocacy Position 3.71 Community Infrastructure be updated, and that Advocacy Position 3.72 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund be retired.
- The proposed revisions intend to align the positions with current advocacy approaches and combine them into one position.
- The proposed changes were noted by the Infrastructure Policy Team and endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team in July 2025.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Endorsing the advocacy position updates and retirement aligns with the WALGA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, in particular:

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The replacement of Advocacy Position 3.71 Community Infrastructure with an updated position.
- The retirement of Advocacy Position 3.72 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund.

BACKGROUND

Local Governments own, lease, maintain and are major stakeholders in community infrastructure across Western Australia. This includes 233 public libraries, as well as cultural centres, performance spaces, galleries, recreation centres and playgrounds. Community infrastructure provides essential community benefits but requires significant capital and ongoing maintenance to upkeep the investment.

Advocacy Position 3.71 defines community infrastructure as including, but not limited to, community pools, sport and recreation facilities, community resource centres, visitor servicing centres, child health centres, community centres, parks, playgrounds, skate parks, public libraries, arts and cultural centres, and shared facilities that Local Governments operate.

The State Government Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) was established in 1974 to provide financial support to Local Governments and community groups to develop sport and recreation infrastructure. The fund is well utilised by Local Governments and has been oversubscribed in recent years. The State Government's annual contribution to CSRFF was halved in the 2025-24 State Budget to \$12 million. Sector feedback indicates that rising construction costs have rendered current State CSRFF contributions insufficient to guarantee project viability. The Cook Government 2025 election commitments, confirmed in the 25-26 State Budget, provide funding for several new location-specific infrastructure investments.

The current CSRFF advocacy position includes a request for two million dollars per annum, quarantined for female representation. The 2025-26 State Budget included \$6 million to

establish a 'Boosting Women and Girls Participation in Sport' grant program and \$23.9 million to support Local Governments and community sporting organisations to upgrade facilities for women at targeted locations.

There is no equivalent ongoing funding for community arts and culture infrastructure. Advocacy calling for this ongoing funding was included in [The West at its Best](#) as an identified priority need for the sector.

[WALGA's Federal election priorities](#) includes the call for \$500 million per year for community infrastructure through formula based targeted Local Government funding. This funding ask is not currently captured in the WALGA Advocacy Manual.

There are no current funding programs specifically for retrofitting accessible design features to community infrastructure. However, the importance of ensuring universal access to community infrastructure aligns with several State Government strategic documents, including the [State Infrastructure Strategy Recommendation 88](#) and [A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030](#).

This advocacy position review was discussed by the Infrastructure Policy Team and endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team in July 2025.

3.7.1 Community Infrastructure

It is proposed that WALGA's **current** advocacy position:

The Association continues to advocate for better planning and support for community infrastructure and investment by the State, Australian and private partners.

be **replaced** with:

Local Governments own, lease, and maintain vital community infrastructure across Western Australia that delivers essential benefits to local communities. Local Governments face significant funding pressures to ensure this infrastructure is effectively planned, developed, maintained, and enhanced to meet evolving community need and population growth.

1. *WALGA calls on the Australian Government to provide \$500 million per annum for community infrastructure through a national formula based, targeted Local Government funding program.*
2. *WALGA calls on the State Government to:*
 - a. *provide \$30 million per annum for the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund*
 - b. *provide \$30 million per annum for community arts and cultural infrastructure,*
 - c. *provide funding for retrofitting accessible design features to community infrastructure*
 - d. *align all community infrastructure funding with existing State co-contribution of at least two-thirds.*

3.7.2 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund

It is proposed that WALGA's **current** position be **retired**:

The Local Government sector advocates for the State Government to:

1. *increase the CSRFF funding pool to at least \$25 million per annum and revert the contribution ratio to 50% split to enable more community programs and infrastructure to be delivered; and*
2. *increase the \$1 million per annum quarantined for female representation to at least \$2 million per annum.*

COMMENT

The proposed revisions provide a broad statement for ongoing investment in community infrastructure, reflecting the significant financial cost of upkeep, including costs associated with retrofitting accessible design features to existing infrastructure. Providing State and Australian Government funding through ongoing open grant programs provides a more equitable and sustainable funding source.

Combining the community infrastructure advocacy positions aims to streamline WALGA advocacy with specific points that reflect WALGA priorities as set out in the [2023-24 State Budget submission](#), [The West at its Best](#) and the [Federal Election Priorities](#), focused on sustainable stewardship of community infrastructure, including:

- Arts and culture
- Sports and recreation
- Accessible design features

The shift from a fifty per cent to a two-thirds State funding contribution reflects a strategic alignment of community infrastructure advocacy with prevailing funding frameworks in the broader infrastructure sector. This ensures consistency and reinforces the case for equitable investment across all infrastructure categories.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

1. Replace Advocacy Position 3.7.1 Community Infrastructure with the following:

Local Governments own, lease, and maintain vital community infrastructure across Western Australia that delivers essential benefits to local communities. Local Governments face significant funding pressures to ensure this infrastructure is effectively planned, developed, maintained, and enhanced to meet evolving community needs and population growth.

1. *WALGA calls on the Australian Government to provide \$500 million per annum for community infrastructure through a national formula based, targeted Local Government funding program.*
2. *WALGA calls on the State Government to:*
 - a. *Provide \$30 million per annum for the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund,*
 - b. *Provide \$30 million per annum for community arts and cultural infrastructure,*
 - c. *Provide funding for retrofitting accessible design features to community infrastructure,*
 - d. *Align all community infrastructure funding with existing State co-contribution of at least two-thirds.*

2. Retire Advocacy Position 3.7.2 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President, Cr Len Handasyde
Seconded: President, Cr Dale Douglas

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

CARRIED

9.1.4 Rural and Remote Health Services Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda Item 8.4)

By Hannah Godsave, Policy Manager Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The provision of healthcare services is both an Australian and State responsibility.
- The WALGA Local Government Primary Healthcare Services Survey provides a comprehensive dataset of the cost, nature and geographical location of Local Government support predominantly focused on General Practice services.
- The recommended revisions update the Advocacy Position to align with the data and recommendations of the Survey Report and provide a framework for further advocacy.
- The People and Place Policy Team considered and endorsed the proposed changes at its meeting on 9 July.

ATTACHMENT

- [Local Government Primary Healthcare Services Survey](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Revising Advocacy Position 3.2.2 aligns to the WALGA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, in particular:

- Influence – Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
- Support – Provide practical sector-wide solutions based on research and evidence.
- Expertise – Foster relationships between our subject matter experts and stakeholders.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The replacement and renaming of Advocacy Position 3.2.2 Regional Health Services with an updated position titled Rural and Remote Health Services.

BACKGROUND

In 2023, WALGA commissioned Rural Health West (RHW) to survey WA Local Governments to ascertain the extent to which Local Governments were providing financial or in-kind support to secure primary healthcare services. The Survey Report provides a comprehensive dataset on the cost, nature, and geographical location of Local Government support, as well as evidence that Local Government support was predominantly focused on General Practice services.

This issue has been identified as a priority for the sector at a number of forums, including the October 2024 Band 4 Local Governments meeting, the May 2025 Zones meetings, priority responses and member advocacy being undertaken by the [Local Government Rural Health Funding Alliance](#).

WALGA has begun a renewed advocacy campaign, with targeted asks of the Australian and State Governments to improve access to primary health services in rural and remote areas, to remove the need for Local Government intervention.

The People and Place Policy Team considered and endorsed the proposed advocacy position changes at its meeting on 9 July.

It is proposed that WALGA's **current** Advocacy Position 3.2.2 Regional Health:

The Association supports continuing to work with affected Local Governments and key stakeholders to identify and develop collaborative strategies. The Association supports continuing to advocate to the State Government to prioritise regional health and the regional health workforce. The Association supports developing a policy connection with the Australian Local Government Association as a pathway for advocating for stronger specialised regional health workforces.

Be **replaced** with:

3.2.2 Rural and Remote Healthcare Services

The Western Australian and Australian Governments are responsible for ensuring that all West Australians have equitable access to primary healthcare services, regardless of their location. Local Governments should not have to step in to support the provision of these services for their communities.

1. *WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to address the systemic failures in the provision of rural and remote primary healthcare services, including through:*
 - a. *the development and implementation of adequate, appropriate and sustainable funding models.*
 - b. *incentivising rural and remote healthcare workforce recruitment and retention.*
2. *Local Governments should be reimbursed for costs incurred to support the provision of primary healthcare services until sustainable funding and workforce models are in place.*

COMMENT

Access to primary health is a critical issue for a large proportion of WALGA members. Local Government support of primary healthcare services creates a financial impost and diverts funding from other Local Government services and functions.

The proposed revisions provide a stronger position on the responsibility of the Australian and State Governments for primary healthcare provision and addressing the cost impost on Local Government, compelled to intervene where the current health system is failing.

The revised position aligns with the wider healthcare reform platform to enable advocacy partnerships and to provide a level of flexibility for the advocacy campaign in response to Government announcements. Terminology changes from regional health to rural and remote, aligns with the language used across healthcare advocacy and reflects that Local Government support for healthcare services is concentrated in areas of smaller populations. Framing the position around financial reimbursement enables sector diversity in response to community need and avoids implying an ongoing funding role for Local Government.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA replace Advocacy Position 3.2.2 Regional Health Services with the following:

The Western Australian and Australian Governments are responsible for ensuring that all West Australians have equitable access to primary healthcare services, regardless of their location. Local Governments should not have to step in to support the provision of these services for their communities.

1. *WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to address the systemic failures in the provision of rural and remote primary healthcare services, including through:*
 - a. *the development and implementation of adequate, appropriate and sustainable funding models*
 - b. *incentivising rural and remote healthcare workforce recruitment and retention.*
2. *Local Governments should be reimbursed for costs incurred to support the provision of primary healthcare services until sustainable funding and workforce models are in place.*

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Jackie Ormsby
Seconded: President Cr Tom Major

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

CARRIED

9.1.5 Health Advocacy Position (State Council Agenda Item 8.5)

By Hannah Godsave, Policy Manager Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Advocacy Position 3.2 relates to public health and predates the *Public Health Act 2016* and the commencement of Stage 5 of the Act in June 2024.
- The position is superseded by Advocacy Position 3.2.1 *Local Public Health Plans*, which was revised in September 2024 to align to the 2016 Act and specifically the implementation of Local Public Health Plans.
- The People and Place Policy Team considered and endorsed the retirement of Advocacy Position 3.2 Health at its meeting on 9 July.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Retiring Advocacy Position 3.2 aligns to the WALGA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, in particular:

- Influence – Lead policy development for the Local Government sector.
- Expertise – Optimise organisational capability to service members' needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The retirement of Advocacy Position 3.2.1 Health.

BACKGROUND

Advocacy position 3.2.1 Health, endorsed in 2005, states:

The Association supports improving health outcomes for Western Australians through the investment in and provision of infrastructure and delivery of services in partnership with health professionals.

This position was last cited in a 2022 WALGA submission to the Department of Health relating to the Statutory Review of the *Food Act 2008*.

The position predates the commencement of the *Public Health Act 2016* and Stage 5 of the Act in 2024, which requires all Local Governments to develop and publish a Local Public Health Plan.

This position is superseded by advocacy position 3.2.1 relating to public health planning and specifically the implementation of Local Public Health Plans:

3.2.1 Local Public Health Plans

WALGA supports the objects and principles of the Public Health Act 2016.

The State Government must ensure that:

- 1. Guidance, tools and resources are developed to support the development of Local Public Health Plans; and*
- 2. Funding is provided for:*
 - a. smaller rural and regional councils to support the development of Local Public Health Plans; and*
 - b. the implementation of actions under Local Public Health Plans.*

The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the revisions to this position in September 2024.

COMMENT

Given changes in State public health legislation and the recent revisions to advocacy position 3.2.1 that cover the aspects of public health alluded to in advocacy position 3.2, this position is no longer required and should be retired.

The People and Place Policy Team considered and endorsed that Advocacy Position 3.2 Health be retired at its meeting on 9 July.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA retire Advocacy Position 3.2 Health.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Kate Johnson
Seconded: Cr Jackie Ormsby

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

CARRIED

9.1.6 Advocacy Positions for Active Transport and Micromobility (State Council Agenda Item 8.6)

By Negar Nili, Policy Officer Transport and Roads

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Six new advocacy positions are proposed, with the aim of providing a clear and unified framework to support Local Governments in planning, delivering, and advocating for walking, cycling, and other forms of Active Transport (AT).
- The new advocacy positions are intended to strengthen WALGA's voice in state and national forums, guide responses to legislative or policy changes, and ensure the sector is well-represented in cross-government initiatives related to AT.
- These positions reflect the growing role of AT in addressing key policy areas including health, sustainability, road safety, and urban liveability. The policy statements cover six key areas:
 - Active Transport Vision and Strategy
 - Funding
 - Safety
 - Education, Encouragement, and Community Engagement
 - eRideables
 - Active Travel to School
- The Infrastructure Policy Team considered and recommended the proposed AT advocacy positions for endorsement by State Council at its meeting on 4 August.

ATTACHMENT

- [Summary of Issues, Challenges for Active Transport in WA](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The new advocacy positions align to the WALGA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, in particular:

- Influence – Lead policy development for the Local Government sector.
- Support – Provide practical sector-wide solutions based on research and evidence.
- Expertise – Promote a dynamic, agile, high-performance culture.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The new advocacy positions will complement existing [Advocacy Positions](#):

- 5.2.5 The Role of Local Government in the Future Management of Warden Controlled Children's Crossings
- 5.2.7 Driving Change - Road Safety Strategy 2020-2030
- 5.3.3 Cycling on Footpaths
- 5.3.4 Licencing cyclists and registering bicycles
- 5.3.5 Active Travel to Schools

5.3.6 Pedestrian Crossings

BACKGROUND

In March 2024, State Council, through the Infrastructure Policy Team requested that WALGA organise a policy forum to better understand issues relating to Active Transport (AT) and develop an integrated policy and advocacy platform. This enhanced focus on AT formed the basis for extensive consultation with Local Governments over the last 18 months. The consultation process was primarily directed at identifying gaps in AT policy and AT infrastructure needs and involved extensive consultation with Local Government AT officers as well as workshops with Elected Members and senior stakeholders from relevant State agencies.

The WALGA Transport and Roads team met with over 30 Local Government officers and held two workshops with diverse stakeholders to support the development and refinement of a discussion paper that examines AT and micromobility in the Western Australian, Local Government context. The consultation process with Local Governments highlighted a range of issues, challenges, and gaps facing AT initiatives in WA, offering valuable insights into Local Governments unique needs and perspectives as they work to enhance AT infrastructure and promote sustainable mobility. The information gathered was summarised into ten key challenges experienced across jurisdictions:

Strategic Issues	Challenges
1. Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speeding and inappropriate travel speed• Driver attitude towards vulnerable road users• Lack of safe crossing points and limited space
2. Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited (no) funding for amenities
3. Network Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding
4. Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding limits are a key challenge and focus of solutions
5. Integration in Plans and Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low community uptake and behaviour change
6. Incentives and Disincentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Car dependency and low awareness of active transport benefits
7. Public Transport Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bikes not permitted on public transport during peak hours
8. Education and Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No dedicated lead• Fragmented efforts across multiple parties
9. E-Rideables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• - Unclear regulation and enforcement
10. Travel to Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor planning for AT in school areas• Limited school staff capacity to manage funding• Inaccessible or inadequate grant funding

These challenges have been addressed in six proposed advocacy positions:

- Active Transport Vision and Strategy
- Funding
- Active Transport Safety
- Education/Encouragement/Community Engagement
- eRideables
- Active Travel to School

ADVOCACY POSITIONS

Active Transport Vision and Strategy	
Position Statement	<p><i>Local Governments recognise the public health, environmental, community, economic and transport benefits offered by active transport and calls on all levels of government to work toward increasing active transport.</i></p> <p><i>WALGA calls on the State and Federal Governments to work with the Local Government sector to develop and implement an Active Transport vision, strategy and actions with measurable goals to increase mode share of active transport. The Active Transport Strategy should include allocation of responsibilities to agencies and identification of sustainable funding.</i></p> <p><i>The relationships to other strategic plans should be defined to align a whole-of-government approach.</i></p>
Background	<p>Active Transport mode share in Western Australia is low compared with many global cities. Increasing the share of trips by active modes provides many benefits including reduced traffic congestion, less atmospheric pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions, improved health through incidental physical activity and opportunities for enhanced community interaction.</p> <p>Integrating an Active Transport Vision and Strategy with other strategic plans will encourage considerations for active travel to be embedded across all planning, design and operational processes.</p>
Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Local Governments to embed measures to enable Active Transport in all Local Government operations, policies, and programs. • Call on the State Government to embed the provision of active transport infrastructure in State planning regulations and guidelines • Invest in stakeholders planning with clearly defined, shared outcomes. • Adopt a cross-government approach, with common performance measures across relevant departments to measure progress. • Promote a greater understanding of Active Transport user needs within all stages of planning and project delivery. • Normalise Active Transport in all infrastructure and policy discussions so that it becomes business as usual. • Better integrate active and public transport through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocating that the PTA provide appropriate end of trip facilities at public transport nodes including secure parking and storage. ○ Calling on the PTA to provide for the carriage of bicycles and eRideables on all train services. ○ Call on the PTA to explore opportunities to accommodate bicycles on buses. • Invest in data collection, management and analysis to inform investment in active transport infrastructure and programs including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing a comprehensive, standardised data-sharing framework and platform for active transport information. ○ Adopting video and AI-driven solutions to enhance the quality and efficiency of data collection, analysis and reporting. ○ Develop a platform dedicated for comprehensive collection and analysis of Active Transport incident data, providing insights to improve safety, infrastructure design and strategic planning. ● Require that design guidance for the public realm provides safe and attractive environment for active transport. ● Provide safety through convenient priority road and rail crossing points for pedestrians and other active transport users and appropriate amenity including quality paths, drinking water at suitable intervals, shade and seating.
Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Closing network gaps ● Travel to Schools ● Safety

Funding	
Position Statement	<i>WALGA calls on Federal and State Governments to provide a step change in funding for Active Transport by providing consistent, long-term investment to support Local Governments in planning, delivering, and maintaining AT infrastructure, programs, and supporting initiatives.</i>
Background	Active Transport is vital to creating healthier, more connected, and sustainable communities. Despite this, funding to support AT—across infrastructure, programs, planning, and maintenance—remains limited, inconsistent, and often short-term. This restricts Local Governments' ability to deliver integrated, accessible AT options that meet community needs. Sustained and coordinated funding is essential to increase uptake, improve safety, and ensure the long-term success of active travel initiatives.
Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Committing to a ten-year allocated funding program to deliver the Long-Term Cycle Network, based on a co-founded model of up to one-third contribution from Local Government. ● Providing non-competitive cost indexed grants based on the extent of the defined active transport network for renewal / maintenance to support appropriate levels of service and asset longevity. ● Establish a new Local Destination Program to fund the development of safe and accessible routes to key community destinations, including schools, train stations, and activity centres. ● Significantly increase overall investment in Active Transport to reflect its role in health, sustainability, and transport outcomes, and bring funding levels closer to international benchmarks.

Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding
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Active Transport Safety	
Position Statement	<i>WALGA calls on the State Government for the provision of safe, pedestrian/bicycle-priority crossing points; safer speeds on local roads and around community hubs, schools, and public transport nodes; and road diet treatments to support safer environments for all users of the road network.</i>
Background	High traffic volumes and vehicle speeds contribute significantly to unsafe conditions for people walking, cycling, and using other forms of Active Transport. Creating safer streets requires a combination of infrastructure improvements, speed management, and environmental design strategies that prioritise the most vulnerable users.
Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve safety for active transport users at existing roundabouts and intersections. Seek reforms to Main Roads WA's speed zoning policies and processes to enhance Local Governments' influence in setting speed limits on local streets and distributor roads. Support road design changes such as tree planting, lane narrowing, and other physical measures that promote slower, safer streets. Reduce through-traffic volumes on all roads except Primary Distributors, especially in residential and mixed-use areas. Target safety improvements in high-risk locations, including school precincts and public transport hubs. Support complementary education initiatives to raise awareness of active transport user safety and responsible road use.
Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety Travel to schools

Education/Encouragement/Community Engagement	
Position Statement	<i>When coupled with investment in infrastructure, education and encouragement programs effectively support the uptake of active transport modes and a cultural shift in attitudes toward active transport. WALGA calls on key stakeholders to form a coalition to advance mode shift to active transport initiatives, support infrastructure implementation, and realise a coordinated, multi-channel approach.</i>
Background	Education, encouragement, and community engagement are essential to increasing the uptake of Active Transport. Beyond infrastructure, shifting travel behaviour relies on building public understanding of the benefits, availability, and safe use of Active Transport options. Raising awareness among both the community and key stakeholders helps normalise Active Transport, promote safety, and support long-term behavioural change.

	Public education campaigns can highlight the benefits of walking, cycling, and micromobility, while also addressing knowledge gaps around safe practices and existing networks. Targeted engagement with schools, local communities, and service providers—such as transport operators and enforcement agencies—can foster a more supportive environment for AT use across all settings.
Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call on the State Government to develop guidance and materials (e.g. toolkits) that support travel behaviour change and promote safe, responsible use of Active Transport and Micromobility. • Adopt a cross-government approach to deliver targeted training for relevant stakeholders on how to safely and respectfully interact with active transport users. • Support behaviour changes programs through incentives such as parking cash-out schemes, and other supportive measures. • Encourage Local Governments to provide a platform to raise public awareness of existing active transport facilities and the benefits of using them.
Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and community engagement

eRideables	
Position Statement	<i>WALGA calls on the State Government to develop and implement a comprehensive regulatory framework to address the safety, sale, and use of escooters and other eRideables in Western Australia. The State Government should consult with stakeholders, including Local Governments, to ensure that the framework is practical, enforceable, and responsive to on-the-ground challenges.</i>
Background	The use of eRideables—such as e-scooters and similar micromobility devices—is rapidly growing across Western Australia. While these devices offer affordable, low-emission transport options, the current regulatory framework has not kept pace with their adoption. Issues such as the sale of non-compliant devices, inconsistent enforcement, and public safety concerns—particularly in high pedestrian activity areas—are placing pressure on Local Governments and other stakeholders. There is a clear need for a coordinated, state-led response that balances innovation with safety, enforcement, and community wellbeing.
Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing clear rules and enforcement to prevent the importation and sale of non-compliant or illegal eRideable devices. • Strengthen enforcement mechanisms and apply appropriate penalties to ensure compliance with existing laws. • Introduce and utilise equipment to verify compliance with legal performance limits.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower Local Governments to regulate the use of eRideables in high pedestrian activity areas, particularly on inner-city footpaths and shared spaces. • Develop a State-led eRideable Safety Action Plan in collaboration with key stakeholders. • Ensure that Local Governments are meaningfully engaged in this process, with WALGA providing formal representation. • Deliver targeted education and awareness initiatives for school-aged children and their parents to promote informed purchasing decisions, understanding of relevant rules, rider courtesy, and safe riding behaviour.
Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eRideables

Active Travel to School	
Position Statement	<i>WALGA recognises that enabling and encouraging active transport to and from schools delivers wide-ranging benefits – including improved public health, reduced traffic congestion, environmental sustainability, and stronger community wellbeing. Despite these benefits, barriers such as safety concerns, limited school resources, and lack of supportive infrastructure prevent the widespread uptake of active travel among students. WALGA supports a coordinated, long-term approach to embed active transport into the school environment, supported by targeted investment, planning, and program delivery.</i>
Background	Supporting children to walk, cycle, or scoot to school contributes to broader goals in public health, transport efficiency, environmental sustainability, and community safety. However, achieving these outcomes requires more than just physical infrastructure. Success depends on a collaborative approach involving schools, Local and State Government, parents, and community organisations. Active travel needs to be embedded as a normal, supported, and safe part of daily life for families. Addressing the existing barriers will require long-term coordination, consistent funding, and stronger alignment between education, transport, and planning systems.
Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing sustained investment in school and community-based active travel programs. • Ensure funding is accessible through clear grant processes and supported by dedicated officers to assist schools with limited staff capacity. • Increase incentives for Traffic Wardens at Children's Crossings. • Encourage car-free zones around schools, where appropriate, to improve safety. • Guidance for schools and local governments to undertake connectivity studies and prioritise low-cost, high-impact improvements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate active transport education into the school curriculum and culture. • Plan and deliver infrastructure that ensures children can travel safely and independently to school.
Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing Network Gaps • Travel to Schools • Education and community engagement • Funding

COMMENT

The proposed policy positions collectively address critical areas needed to advance AT across Western Australia. Each position strengthens WALGA's advocacy platform and supports Local Governments in addressing current and emerging challenges.

Active Transport Vision and Strategy

A clear, coordinated strategy is essential to embed AT across planning, infrastructure, and service delivery. Currently, efforts are fragmented and lack measurable goals or alignment between agencies. A shared vision and defined responsibilities will support integrated planning and prioritisation of resources at all levels of government.

Funding

Inconsistent, short-term funding limits Local Governments' ability to deliver and maintain Active Transport infrastructure and programs. A long-term, sustainable funding framework aligned with national and international benchmarks is critical to achieving health, environmental, and transport outcomes.

Active Transport Safety

High traffic speeds and unsafe infrastructure are key barriers to AT uptake. A safe, low-speed environment supported by appropriate design and policy measures is necessary to protect vulnerable road users and improve community confidence in walking, cycling, and other forms of active mobility.

Education, Encouragement, and Community Engagement

Behaviour change requires more than infrastructure. Effective education and engagement build public understanding, increase awareness, and help normalise Active Transport. A coordinated approach involving communities and relevant stakeholders is vital for shifting attitudes and increasing uptake.

eRideables

The rapid uptake of eRideables has outpaced the current regulatory framework, creating enforcement, safety, and infrastructure challenges. A comprehensive, State-led framework, developed with Local Government input is needed to address compliance, regulation, and safety in a rapidly evolving mobility landscape.

Active Travel to School

Despite its wide-ranging benefits, Active Travel to School remains low due to safety concerns, infrastructure gaps, and limited school resources. A more coordinated, long-term approach is needed, one that integrates planning, education, and investment to support safe, independent travel for students.

The proposed advocacy positions were endorsed by the Infrastructure Policy Team on 4 August.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA endorse the proposed advocacy positions on Active Transport and micromobility.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Lynn MacLaren

Seconded: Deputy Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

That the Great Southern Country Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.6 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED

9.2 OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

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

Noted

9.2.1 WALGA State President's Report

Attachment No. 3 [WALGA State President's Report](#)

Noted

10 EMERGING ISSUES/COLLABORATION

City of Albany

- Record \$42M capital works budget for airport upgrades; runway condition better than expected. Regional air service should be maintained 26/27.
- UV rates increased by 6% to fund gravel road sealing; GRV rates directed toward rural road improvements.
- Mountain bike trails on Mt Adelaide underway, expected completion by end of year.
- Albany pushing for a new pool in the next State election, as Denmark opts out of building one.
- Recently met with Hon Samantha Rowe MLC – Brought up Albany Highway and need more overtaking lanes and the need to widen South Coast Highway.

Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

- Staffing issues, several CEOs and recently lost deputy CEOs, with several internal staffing positions being currently interviewed.

Shire of Denmark

- Local government has deferred plans for a town pool due to affordability concerns, aiming to revisit the idea when the population reaches 10,000.
- Concerns about regional health services are growing, with suggestions to engage local GPs about Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) coverage and ensure patients' needs are being met. Of particular concern is the disparity between cost of services in regional areas compared to the metropolitan area. Denmark planning to raise it with the Minister for Health, emphasising that regional residents deserve equitable choices and services.
- Denmark will bring an item to the next zone meeting on this issue.

Shire of Gnowangerup

- Ongoing advocacy for improved GP services is gaining momentum, with 20 Local Governments in alliance pushing for State and Federal support. Federal traction is emerging, but the lack of response from the State Health Minister is disappointing.
- Annual Bloom Festival begins 27 September and Wild Gravel Cycling on 11 October.

Shire of Jerramungup

- Recently did an ABC interview regarding housing.
- Involved in the health alliance alongside Gnowangerup.
- Working on a cultural precinct, with a demand for services in Bremer Bay.

Shire of Katanning

- Biggest project they are delivering is an early child care hub for 64 children and \$10m. Expected to be an 18 month build and they are about to make first payment.
- Katanning Airport resurfacing project to receive funding contributions from both State and Federal Governments. Initially left \$140k for Katanning to contribute. However, the State reduced contribution to align with Federal Government (30%). Now \$280k left for Katanning to fund. Spoken to State Government to get initial 50% funding reinstated.
- Sheep population in massive decline since 2022. Not seeing that in the sale yard. 15-20k per week. Spent 736k for tagging at the sale yard.
- Wandering stock issue - cattle are getting out due to fencing decline. Local Government has little power to deal with wandering stock issue (ie fixing fencing on private property or penalties)
- Katanning gold project sits on the border of 3 Shires is progressing well. 1.25 million ounces of gold as a reserve. Worth about \$5 billion. Major problem with getting freehold access with a mining licence over it, but that license has since lapsed. Plans include relocating houses and sheds and building a workers camp in Katanning.

Shire of Kent

- Problems with timing of Government departments approving funding for evacuation centre.
- Empty GROH Housing is a concern.

Shire of Kojonup

- Relatively quiet at the moment, as they are aware of the upcoming election.
- Disappointed by the Community Benefits on Renewable Energy Facilities submission which came out of Narrogin, as they are against arguing for a tiered system or a cap.

Shire of Plantagenet

- Budget approved early August – 4.8% rate increase across the board. Main projects include pool and roads.
- Some of the big sheep operators have been badly affected by the live sheep export ban and the costs associated with more grain, freight and pressure of transport.

Shire of Ravensthorpe

- Ravensthorpe were hosting their first Great Southern Country Zone meeting and were able to showcase their new cultural precinct. Droughts in 2018/19 meant they were eligible for Federal funding, and the final project cost was \$9 million.
- Agriculture is thriving, tourism is steadily growing with events like the Wildflower Show, and mining is expected to pick up with lithium, graphite, and gold projects underway, although some raise environmental concerns.
- A 4.95% rate increase was implemented to balance the budget, leading to service cuts (cut roadside verge collection and reduced office hours)
- The closure of the local grocery store has impacted liveability, prompting efforts to re-lease the building.
- Upcoming Local Government elections will bring in three new councillors, and a new CEO is being sought.

Shire of Woodanilling

- The local hotel been on the market for 2 years and closed for 18 months. An application was received for a change of use to change to a residential home, but this upset the community based on the small number of commercial blocks in town. The change of use application was rejected, and Woodanilling are community to discuss opportunities with the owner to get it occupied by a commercial operator.
- 9-10% rate increases for 3 years now, and they are getting close to Katanning's rates.

11 OTHER BUSINESS

12 NEXT ZONE MEETING

The next meeting of the Great Southern Country Zone will be held on Friday, 21 November at the Shire of Woodanilling commencing at 10:00am.

13 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 11:48am.

ATTACHMENT 1

Zone Status Report – August 2025

[Back to Item 6.2.1](#)

Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
5 March 2025 State Council Agenda Item 8.1 Climate Change Advocacy Position	<p>The Zone's motion to support the recommendation was defeated and the following comment was noted:</p> <p><i>The majority of Zone Delegates noted their Local Governments did not have adopted positions on climate change and those delegates considered they did not have a basis by which they could support the proposed WALGA advocacy position.</i></p>	<p>At the March State Council meeting it was resolved:</p> <p><i>That State Council refer this advocacy item back to the Environment Policy Team for further development.</i></p> <p>RESOLUTION 003.1/2025 CARRIED</p> <p>At the 24 March 2025 Environment Policy Team meeting, it was agreed that WALGA would develop a consultation approach for consideration by the Policy Team.</p> <p>At the 29 May 2025 meeting, the Policy Team agreed to the proposed consultation approach, which involves providing the composite Advocacy Position to all Local Governments for a 10-week consultation period, with Council endorsed or CEO approved feedback preferred. An additional Policy Team meeting will be held to consider comments and a composite resolution.</p> <p>Consultation is expected to commence by September 2025.</p>	August 2025	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039</p>

Zone Action Items – August 2025

[Back to Item 6.2.2](#)

Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
2025, 11 April Item 7.2.1 Zone Strategic Priorities	<p>The Great Southern Country Zone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates for the Minister for Great Southern to attend meetings of the Zone and if the Minister agrees to attend, then at the first meeting attended the Zone Secretariat is to coordinate with Zone members a presentation at that meeting on the Zone's Strategic Priorities for discussion with the Minister. Writes to responsible Ministers advocating for the Zone's Strategic Priorities. <p>NOTE: Secretariate to send GSCZ's Regional Education submission to the Minister for Education.</p>	<p>Action deferred until after Minister attends June Zone meeting.</p> <p>August 2025: Minister's office has remained in contact with the WALGA Secretariat and has been advised of the Zone's 2025 meeting schedule. The Secretariat will advise the Minister's office of the 2026 meeting schedule, once determined by the Zone.</p>	Ongoing	Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer
2025, 20 June Item 7.3.4 Draft Guideline on Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Projects	<p>The Zone determined to form a working group to prepare a submission on behalf of the Zone. Zone Delegates self-nominated, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Cr Kate O'Keeffe Deputy President Cr Doug Barritt Karen Callaghan President Cr Kristy D'Aprile Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry President Cr Roger Bilney Grant Thompson President, Cr Len Handasyde Cr Scott Crosby <p>Zone Secretariat to develop draft submission and facilitate working group meeting to finalise the submission.</p>	<p>August 2025: The Zone Working Group met on Monday, 21 July and provided feedback, incorporated into a final draft circulated to Working Group Members on 15 August. The Zone's submission will have been submitted to Powering WA on Monday 18 August 2025.</p>	Completed GSCZ 22/08/2025	Lyn Fogg, Zone Executive Officer



President's Report

September 2025

Introduction

It has been a busy few months for the Local Government sector, with several issues getting substantial public attention.

Across these past few months, we've responded to more than 40 media queries and in some instances, I have been disappointed with the representation of the sector and have responded accordingly – noting the clear policy positions of WALGA.

Please be assured, WALGA will continue to take every opportunity to champion the incredible efforts of WA Local Governments.

The WALGA Local Government Awards, held at the WA Museum on 19 July celebrated the outstanding achievements and contributions of individuals and Councils across the State. Feedback continues to support the decision to host the Awards as a stand-alone event, allowing adequate time to appropriately acknowledge award recipients.

Rating of Miscellaneous Licences

WALGA strongly supports the Supreme Court's interpretation on the ability for local Governments to rate miscellaneous licences and opposes the State Government's proposed amendments to provide an exemption for these licences.

The Association maintains that:

- Legislative changes should not override judicial decisions that promote equity and sustainability.
- Occupied land under miscellaneous licences should be rateable.
- The resource sector should contribute to local communities through rates, just as other property owners do.

WALGA has advocated strongly on this issue following the State Governments announcement to legislate for a rating exemption for miscellaneous licences as follows:

Thursday, 10 July 2025

- WALGA media statement – [Supreme Court decision supports critical role of Local Government](#)
- ABC Drive, [interview with Geraldine Mellet](#)

Saturday, 2 August 2025

- WALGA media statement - [WALGA condemns State Government move to legislate against Supreme Court decision](#)
- The West Australian, Rebecca Le May - [WA Local Government Association hits back as State Government shields miners from land rates](#)

Sunday, 3 August 2025

- The Sunday Times (pg. 5), Rebecca Le May – “Councils’ fury over mining land rates’

Monday, 4 August

- ABC News online, Chloe Henville - [“Move to exempt miners from paying rates on miscellaneous licenses 'concerning”](#)
- ABC Mornings with Nadia Mitsopoulos – [“WALGA president Karen Chappel and AMEC CEO Warren Pearce discuss the State Government plan to prevent councils levying rates on miscellaneous licences”](#)
- 7 Regional News, Brandon Demura - [“State Government accused of re-writing rulebook for WA Councils”](#)
- ABC News Perth, Blake Kagi - [“Local Governments condemn State Government move”](#)

Local Government Elections

Work has commenced on preparing for the October 2025 Local Government Elections. In addition to the New Councillor Webinar hosted by WALGA and joined by the Minister, LGIRS and WAEC, a statewide media campaign has been developed to launch in August to both encourage diversity of candidate nominations and voter participation.

[Further details on Statewide Candidate Information Webinar](#)

Upcoming Election Candidate Information webinar ahead of the opening of nominations for the 2025 Local Government Elections.

Monday, 18 August
6:00pm to 7:30pm
Online via Zoom

This session is designed to support individuals considering nomination and will provide a clear overview of:

- the election process
- the responsibilities of Council Members and Local Governments
- the regulatory role of LGIRS in Western Australia

The Webinar will include presentations from Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA - Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne, Dennis O'Reilly - Acting WA Electoral Commissioner, Erin Gauntlett - LGIRS Deputy Director General.

Local Governments are encouraged to share details of the webinar through their networks and host a group viewing for community members who may be interested in nominating for the upcoming elections.

The webinar will be recorded and will be available online after the event.

Local Candidate Information Forums

If your Local Government is interested in inviting WALGA to provide a presentation at your local candidate briefing, please register your interest as soon as possible, by providing your requested date and time to governance@walga.asn.au.

WALGA will prioritise local candidate briefings jointly hosted by several Local Governments, and depending upon our capacity, will then consider individual briefings for a single Local Government.

In addition, WALGA is also developing training for Independent Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee members, particularly around chairing meetings.

WALGA's Members Hub

The Member Hub is now open on level 3 at WALGA's office, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville. Our Member Hub is a new service offering, providing bookable meeting rooms and shared and private working spaces, available to all Member Local Governments. I encourage all Members to contact [WALGA's reception](#) for bookings.

Political Engagement

WALGA's political engagement has continued, with a range of meetings held with State Ministers, Shadow Ministers and other Members of Parliament following the Election. This engagement has been critical in re-establishing the sector's priorities with our State policy makers.

Importantly, I met with Premier Roger Cook on 9 July. This was a positive engagement that reaffirmed the Government's commitment to working with the sector through WALGA on important issues for Western Australia.

Emergency Management

I strongly urge all Local Governments to complete the WALGA 2025 Local Government Emergency Management Survey that will be sent to all Members in September. The Survey is an important tool that enables WALGA to understand and quantify the sector's concerns and needs in meeting its emergency management responsibilities. Focus areas for the 2025 Survey include: Bushfire Brigade management, Aboriginal cultural heritage considerations, and reform of the Local Government Grants Scheme. The 2025 survey findings will be presented to Zones and State Council – an important opportunity to share your views and perspectives. The Survey will be open for 4 weeks.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the 2025 Local Government Emergency Management Forum hosted by WALGA on 17 June 2025 at the City of Stirling. The Forum, themed *Local Government Future Proof: Preparing today for tomorrow's challenges*, provided a fantastic opportunity for 150 attendees from over 41 Local Governments to enhance their capabilities, build insights, and share strategies in undertaking their critical emergency management responsibilities.

Polyphagous shot-hole borer

The Government announced on 19 June that it had been decided it was longer feasible to eradicate PSHB and that a National Transition to Management Plan will be developed. This decision is deeply disappointing and will have significant implications for Local Government. As I indicated in [WALGA's statement](#), the decision to move from eradication to a management phase for PSHB is a result of the inadequacy of the State Government's early response to PSHB.

On 29 July 2025 I met with the Hon Jackie Jarvis, Minister for Agriculture and Food; Fisheries; Forestry; Small Business to express WALGA's concerns. I have sought assurance that Local Government, and other key stakeholders will be meaningfully engaged in the

development of the management arrangements. WALGA is also advocating for long-term funding support for the sector.

Tree Protection on Private Land

The recent State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) decision *Zorzi and Town of Cambridge [2025] WASAT 77*, held that the removal of a single existing tree can constitute development and therefore requires development approval. This marks the first instance where SAT has classified the removal of a single tree in an urban context as development.

This decision vindicates the work WALGA has undertaken to support Local Governments in their endeavours to protect large canopy trees on private land and highlights the importance of having a clear local planning framework, such as WALGA's Tree Retention Model LPP, in outlining when approval is necessary for tree removal.

Attacks on Local Government Planning Functions

You will be aware of recent media coverage of comments made by the Minister for Planning, John Carey MLA in relation to the performance of Local Government planning and building regulatory functions and claims that our sector is purposely holding up and delaying housing approvals.

WALGA strongly refutes the Minister's claims and I have made several media appearances to defend the sector's planning performance. These claims are baseless and are not representative of the critical role and that Local Government planning plays in delivering sustainable and liveable communities and places.

In fact, WALGA's Local Government Performance Monitoring Project shows that 99% of all development applications across Western Australia were approved by Local Governments in 2023-24, a level of performance consistent over the past eight years.

Local Government is and has always been the backbone of the planning system, determining more than 20,000 proposals each year. WALGA will continue to stand up to these unjustified attacks.

President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP
WALGA President

President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 2 July and scheduled before 5 September are as follows:

State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Hon Roger Cook BA GradDipBus (PR) MBA MLA, Premier; Minister for State Development; Trade and Investment; Economic Diversification
- National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting Dinner with Hon Kristy McBain MP
- National Emergency Management Minister Meeting
- WA Police
- Office of the Auditor General
 - Nayna Raniga
 - Jason Beeley
- Hon Matthew Swinbourn BA LLB MLC, Minister for the Environment; Community Services; Homelessness
- Hon Don Punch BPsych BSocwk MBA MLA, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Water; Climate Resilience; South West
- Hon Dr Tony Buti BPE DipEd MIR LLB DPhil MLA, Attorney General; Minister for Commerce; Tertiary and International Education; Multicultural Interests
- Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC. Minister for Agriculture and Food; Fisheries; Forestry; Small Business; Mid West
- Hon Hannah Beazley BA MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne
- Ms Kirrilee Warr MLA, Shadow Minister for Local Government; Fisheries
- Hon Sabine Winton BA BPS MLA, Minister for Education; Early Childhood; Preventative Health; Wheatbelt

Zone Meetings

- Northern Country Zone
- North Metropolitan Zone
- Kimberley Zone Meeting

Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
 - Strategic Forum, 2 July
 - State Council Meeting, 2 July
 - Information Forum, 6 August
 - Finance & Services Committee
 - Local Government House Trust
- **ALGA**
 - Executive Meeting x3
 - Board Meeting (Post NGA Conference)
- **LGIS**
 - Board Meeting
 - 11 July
 - 22 August
 - Risk and Compliance Committee Meeting

- Town Team Movement
- 2025 WALGA Local Government Awards
- Shire of Morawa Midwest NAIDOC Ceremony
- Lord Mayors Distress Relief Fund Board Meeting
- WALGA Certificate III Virtual Graduation
- Shire of Jerramungup, Deputy President Cr Julie Leenhouders & CEO, Martin Cuthbert
- Shire of Ravensthorpe, President Cr Tom Major & CEO, Matthew Bird
- State Council Agenda Briefing for Zone Chairs
- WALGA Transport and Roads Forum
- Regional Capital Alliances WA Meeting
- State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee Meeting

Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations

- Kimberley Regional Group and Regional Capital Alliances WA Government Forum
- Bringing Dowerin Downtown Lunch
- NGAA 2025 Congress Sunset Dinner & Drinks
- Shire of Perenjori Official Supermarket Opening
- Regional Road Group Chairs Workshop
- Statewide Candidate Briefing Webinar
- Pathways to Politics for Women