

# Great Southern Country Zone Minutes

Friday, 19 June 2026

Hosted by the Shire of Cranbrook  
Cranbrook Sporting Club  
67 King St, Cranbrook

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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.

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

## 1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

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### 1.1 OPENING

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*Zone Chair, Cr Scott Crosby opened the meeting at 9:02am.*

*Shire of Cranbrook President, Cr Perin Mulcahy welcomed Delegates and guests to the Shire.*

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### 1.2 ATTENDANCE

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<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>2 Voting Delegates from each Member Local Government</b>
<b>City of Albany</b>	Deputy Mayor Cr Paul Terry CEO Andrew Sharpe (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup</b>	President Cr Doug Barritt CEO Karen Callaghan (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Cranbrook</b>	President Cr Perin Mulcahy Cr Daisy Egerton-Warburton CEO Linda Gray (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Denmark</b>	President Cr Aaron Wiggins Cr Janine Phillips CEO David King (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Gnowangerup</b>	Deputy President Cr Rebecca O'Meehan Cr Mick Creagh (observer) CEO David Nicholson (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Jerramungup</b>	Cr Paul Barrett CEO Martin Cuthbert (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Katanning</b>	President Cr Kristy D'Aprile Cr Ian Hanna CEO Peter Klein (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Kent</b>	President Cr Kate Johnston Cr Scott Crosby ( <b>Chair</b> ) CEO Christie Smith (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Kojonup</b>	President Cr Roger Bilney Cr Michael Mathwin CEO Grant Thompson (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Plantagenet</b>	President Cr Len Handasyde Cr Joshua Leibeck CEO Julian Murphy (non-voting)
<b>Shire of Ravensthorpe</b>	President Cr Rachel Gibson CEO Nicole O'Neill (non-voting)

**Shire of Woodanilling**

President Cr Russel Thomson  
Cr Sally Vermeulen

**GUESTS****Guest Speaker**

Department of Fire and  
Emergency Services

Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM, Fire and Emergency  
Services Commissioner

**Members of Parliament**

Hon Reece Whitby MLA; Minister for Police; Road Safety;  
Tourism; Great Southern

**WALGA**

Mayor Mark Irwin, WALGA President  
Mr Nick Sloan, Chief Executive Officer  
Ms Lyn Fogg, Governance Specialist  
Ms Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and  
Corporate Governance  
Ms Rachel Armstrong, Policy Manager Emergency  
Management

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**1.3 APOLOGIES**

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**MEMBERS**

City of Albany

Cr Craig McKinley

Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

Cr Sara Robinson

Shire of Gnowangerup

President Cr Kate O'Keefe

Shire of Jerramungup

President Cr Nathan Brown

Shire of Ravensthorpe

Cr Bill Auburn

Shire of Woodanilling

CEO Anika Serer

**GUESTS****Agencies**

Great Southern Development  
Commission

Ms Natasha Monks, Chief Executive Officer

Regional Development  
Australia – Great Southern  
WA Inc

Mr Simon Lyas, Director, Regional Development

**Members of Parliament**

Mr Scott Leary MLA, Member for Albany  
Mr Peter Rundle, MLA, Member for Roe  
Mr Rick Wilson MP, Federal Member for O'Connor  
Hon Sandra Carr MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Mr Bevan Eatts, MLA Member for Warren-Blackwood

**WALGA**

Ms Michelle Blackhurst, Regional Road Safety Adviser

### 3 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.

### 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Nil.

### 5 DEPUTATIONS / GUEST SPEAKERS

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#### 5.1 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

*Members of Federal and State Government, representing the Zone Member Local Government Districts, are invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to Zone Members.*

**Hon Reece Whitby MLA; Minister for Police; Road Safety; Tourism; Great Southern** provided a presentation to the Zone on current initiatives and policies in the region including in relation to road safety, fuel security and Seven Cities.

*Item 8.5 was brought forward on the Agenda.*

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#### 8.5 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Attachment No. 5 [WALGA President's Report](#)

WALGA President Mayor Mark Irwin presented the President's Report.

**Noted**

*Item 5.2 was presented later in the meeting, after item 7.2.2.*

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#### 5.2 DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM, addressed Zone Members' concerns with the proposed Consolidated Emergency Services Act and management responsibility of Bush Fire Brigades.

## 6 AGENCY REPORTS

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### 6.1 GREAT SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (GSDC)

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Ms Natasha Monks, Chief Executive Officer was an apology.

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

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Mr Simon Lyas, Director, Regional Development was an apology.

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### 6.3 GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL ROADS GROUP

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Cr Len Handasyde, Shire of Plantagenet provided a verbal report to the Zone.

**Noted**

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### 6.4 LGIRS LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION REPORT

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**Attachment No 1**     [LGIRS Local Government Division Report - June 2026](#)

The June 2026 report from the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) Local Government Division is enclosed as an attachment.

**Noted**

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### 6.5 WALGA ROADWISE

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Ms Michelle Blackhurst, RoadWise Road Safety Advisor was an apology.

## 7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

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### 7.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 24 APRIL 2026

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The Minutes of the Great Southern Country Zone meeting held on 24 April 2026 have previously been circulated to Delegates.

#### RESOLUTION

**Moved:**            President Cr Len Handasyde  
**Seconded:**      President Cr Kate Johnston

**That the Minutes of the Great Southern Country Zone meeting held on 24 April 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.**

**CARRIED**

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## 7.2 ZONE RESOLUTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS STATUS REPORTS

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### 7.2.1 Zone Status Report

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

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

### 7.2.2 Zone Action Items Report

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

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

#### RESOLUTION (Items 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 combined)

Moved: President Cr Kate Johnston

Seconded: Cr Rebecca O'Meehan

That the Great Southern Country Zone NOTES the:

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

CARRIED

## 8 ZONE BUSINESS

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### 8.1 ZONE REPORTS

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#### 8.1.1 Zone Financial Report for 11 months ending 31 May 2026

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*By Ms Nilpa Shah-Smith, WALGA Finance Manager*

*NOTE: All amounts are excluding GST unless otherwise specified*

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

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

<b>Great Southern Country Zone</b>			
<b>Statement of Income and Expenditure</b>			
<b>01 July 2025 to 31 May 2026</b>			
	<b>Note</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>
		<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Subscriptions	1	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Other			

<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 6,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,000.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Bank Fees		\$ 110.00	\$ 150.00
Meeting Costs (Catering)	2	\$ 3,674.40	\$ 4,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 3,784.40</b>	<b>\$ 4,150.00</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		<b>\$ 2,215.60</b>	<b>\$ 1,850.00</b>

### Notes

1. Subscription fee of \$500 per Zone Member excluding GST, invoices were sent to Members in September and all received and transferred to GSCZ Bank Account
2. August 2025 Zone meeting catering (\$1,331.81) , November 2025 Zone meeting catering (\$572.73), February 2026 Zone meeting catering (\$811.82), April 2026 Zone meeting catering (\$1,040.00)

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

<b>Great Southern Country Zone Balance Sheet as at 31 May 26</b>		
	<b>Note</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Bank		\$9,599.60
Debtors		
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>\$9,599.60</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Creditors		\$ -
GST Payable\ (Receivable)		-\$327.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>-\$327.00</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>\$9,926.60</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Members Funds B/F		\$7,710.00
Current year earnings		\$2,215.60
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>\$ 9,925.60</b>

### RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Len Handasyde  
 Seconded: President Cr Doug Barritt

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

**CARRIED**

## 8.1.2 Zone Budget 2026/2027

By Kathy Robertson, Zone Executive Officer

The Zone's expected closing balance as at 30 June 2026 is \$8,915.60.

The Zone's actual expenses in 2025/2026 were limited to catering (\$4,674.40) and bank fees (\$120).

### Proposed Budget Allocations:

**Meeting Costs (Catering):** The Zone expended approximately \$935 on catering for each meeting in 2025/2026. It is proposed to budget \$1,000 for catering each meeting in 2026/2027.

**Zone Subscription Fees:** It is recommended to leave the 2026/2027 subscription fee the same as last financial year: \$500 per Member Local Government. However, it is open to the Zone to adopt another subscription fee.

**Consultant Fees:** The Zone is considering engaging a consultant to assist with work on the cost-shifting issue (see [Agenda item 7.2.2](#) below). If the Zone decides to progress with this work, the cost will be separately invoiced to each Local Government Member.

The following 2026/2027 budget is proposed:

	<b>Budget 2025-2026 \$</b>	<b>Forecast* 2025-2026 \$</b>	<b>Budget 2026-2027 \$</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Subscriptions <sup>1</sup>	\$ 6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Other			
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$6,000.00</b>	<b>\$6,000.00</b>	<b>\$6,000.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Bank Fees	\$150.00	\$120.00	\$120.00
Meeting Costs (Catering)	\$4,000.00	\$4,674.40	\$5,000.00 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$4,150.00</b>	<b>\$4,794.40</b>	<b>\$5,120.00</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$1,850.00</b>	<b>\$1,205.60</b>	<b>\$880.00</b>
Estimated brought forward Balance 1 July	\$7,710.00	\$7,710.00	\$8,915.60
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$1,850.00	\$1,205.60	\$880.00
<b>Estimated Balance 30 June</b>	<b>\$9,560.00</b>	<b>\$8,915.60</b>	<b>\$9,795.60</b>

\* Actuals up to 31 May and forecast for the month of June

<sup>1</sup> Assume annual subscriptions remain the same, \$500 per Member Local Government

<sup>2</sup> \$1,000 budgeted for each meeting

## RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Paul Terry  
Seconded: President Cr Kate Johnston

That the Great Southern Country Zone, endorses:

1. An Annual Subscription Fee of \$500 per Zone Member Local Government for 2026/2027; and
2. The 2026/2027 Zone Budget as shown.

CARRIED

### 8.1.3 Zone Chair's Report

*Cr Scott Crosby, Zone Chair*

Cr Crosby thanked outgoing Zone Executive Officer Lyn Fogg for her work for the Zone over the last 4 years.

## 8.2 ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### 8.2.1 Zone Strategic Priorities

#### BACKGROUND

Zone Members participated in a workshop at the February 2026 Zone meeting to consider the Zone's strategic priorities. The workshop outcomes were presented to the Zone at the April meeting, including a ranking of priorities based on Member voting at the workshop.

Ranking	Priority	Votes
1.	Cost shifting and responsibility transfer without funding or policy frameworks	21
2.	Firefighting / Funding / OHS Obligations / BF Act outdated	14
3.	Transport and road network	13
4.	Residential and industrial development	11
5.	Funding for infrastructure growth/renewal	8
6.	Sustainable waste management	4
7.	Waste management – recycling/rehabilitation	3
8.	Local essential services / health	3
9.	Unsustainable funding model and growing grant dependency	3
10.	Mobile phone / communication blackspots	1
11.	Road maintenance safety / transport	1
12.	Renewables	1
13.	Sustainable tourism management	0
14.	Red tape, governance burden and the future of LG leadership	0

By agreement of the Zone, each of the top four strategic priorities will be presented for further consideration and action at future Zone meetings, as below.

April 2026 <i>(last meeting)</i>	PRIORITY 1: Cost shifting and responsibility transfer
June 2026 <i>(this meeting)</i>	<b>PRIORITY 2: Firefighting / Funding / OHS Obligations / BF Act outdated</b>
August 2026	PRIORITY 3: Transport and road network
November 2026	PRIORITY 4: Residential and industrial development

The Zone considered Priority 1 at the last meeting. An update on the actions coming out of that discussion is provided below in [Agenda item 7.2.2](#).

**COMMENT**

For consideration at this meeting is Priority 2: **Firefighting / Funding / OHS Obligations / BF Act outdated**.

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

The following [WALGA Advocacy Positions](#) are relevant to this topic:

**8.1 Emergency Management Principles**

1. *The State Government bears fundamental responsibility for emergency management and has the role of providing strategic guidance, support and services for emergency management activities in Western Australia.*
2. *The State Government should provide financial and resourcing support as necessary to enable Local Governments to adequately deliver their extensive emergency management roles and responsibilities under the State Emergency Management Framework.*
3. *The Local Government Sector should be engaged as a partner in policy and legislative reviews that impact Local Government emergency management roles and responsibilities.*

### **8.3 Sustainable Grant Funding Model for Emergency Management**

*Local Government should be empowered to discharge its emergency management responsibilities through sustainable grant funding models that support a shared responsibility and all hazards approach to prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from natural disasters. A sustainable grant funding model for Local Government emergency management:*

- 1. empowers Local Governments to undertake proactive approaches to preparedness, prevention, response and recovery;*
- 2. supports the resilience of local communities through capacity-building activities and programs;*
- 3. is responsive to the variations in Local Government resourcing and context;*
- 4. develops the skills, capacity and capability of the emergency management workforce; and*
- 5. is consistent, flexible, timely, accessible, scalable, strategic and the guidance provided is comprehensive.*

### **8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Act**

- 1. The Association advocates for the development of a Consolidated Emergency Services Act to provide a comprehensive and contemporary legislative framework to support the effective delivery of emergency services in Western Australia. The Legislation should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all emergency management stakeholders including Local Government.*
- 2. The Local Government sector seeks ongoing engagement in the scoping and co-design of the Act and associated Regulations and supporting materials such as Guidelines and fact sheets.*
- 3. The Association advocates for DFES to undertake a full costing analysis of the new Act and to provide to Local Government details of the cost implications prior to the release of any Exposure Draft Bill.*
- 4. Any new or increased responsibilities placed on Local Government by the Consolidated Emergency Services Act must be accompanied by funding and resource support to enable Local Governments to adequately discharge those responsibilities.*
- 5. The Association recognises that in addition to the Consolidated Emergency Services Act, the Regulations and other supporting materials that are developed to support it provide a key resource for Local Governments in understanding and discharging their legislative obligations.*

### **8.7 Emergency Services Levy**

- 1. Local Government request the implementation of the recommendations from the 2017 Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) Review of the Emergency Services Levy, which supported increased transparency and accountability in the administration and distribution of the ESL through:*
  - a) Expansion of the ESL to fund Local Government emergency management activities across prevention, preparedness and response;*
  - b) Administration of the ESL by an independent organisation that is funded through consolidated revenue, with regular independent reviews of expenditure and assessment of the effectiveness of ESL funding expenditure to support prevention, preparedness and response activities;*
  - c) The ESL administration fee should recompense Local Governments for the complete cost of administering the ESL;*
  - d) Public disclosure of the allocation and expenditure of the ESL;*

- e) *Public disclosure by the State Government on the progress of implementation of each of the ERA Review recommendations; and*
  - f) *A review of the role, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program.*
2. *Local Government advocates that the ESL should be collected by the State Government, but failing that, the administration fee should recompense Local Governments for the complete cost of administering the ESL.*

### **8.8 Local Government Grants Scheme**

*Local Government supports:*

1. *A full, independent review of the LGGS to investigate and analyse how ESL funds are allocated to Local Government via the LGGS;*
2. *A redesign of the LGGS to remove the ineligible and eligible list and create a sustainable, modern, equitable grants program that funds Local Government emergency management activities across prevention, preparedness and response;*
3. *An audit of existing buildings, facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment for both Local Government Volunteer Bushfire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Services (SES) to inform the preparation of a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan and to guide future funding requests; and*
4. *in the interim, an immediate increase in the quantum of State Government funding to enable the provision of funding of operating and capital grant applications in full, to provide all resources necessary for the safe and efficient operation of Local Government Bushfire Brigades, in accordance with obligations of the Work Health and Safety 2020 legislation.*

### **8.10 Management of Bush Fire Brigades**

1. *Bush Fire Brigade volunteers play a critical role in helping to protect their local communities. Local knowledge and skills are integral to bushfire management in Western Australia.*
2. *Future management and funding of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades must:*
  - a) *Recognise the changing risk environment, including work health and safety requirements, and the increasing intensity and frequency of bushfires;*
  - b) *Take account of the differing circumstances of Bush Fire Brigade units and regional variations in bush firefighting approaches; and*
  - c) *Be adequately and equitably resourced through the Emergency Services Levy.*
3. *The State Government, through the Consolidated Emergency Services Act and/or other mechanism's must:*
  - a) *Establish a clear framework to enable transfer of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government if a Local Government decides to do;*
  - b) *Consult on the process, timeline, and implications for transfer of responsibility for Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with 3(a) through the establishment of a working group comprising representatives of Local Government, Bush Fire Brigades, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES);*
  - c) *Provide for mandatory and minimum training requirements and recognition of competency and prior learning for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers, supported by locally delivered fit-for-purpose and universally accessible training program, designed in consultation with Bush Fire*

*Brigade representatives, Local Government and LGIS, and managed by DFES; and*

- d) *Develop a co-designed suite of relevant management guidelines and materials to assist in the management of Bush Fire Brigades.*
4. *As a matter of priority within the emergency services Acts review, the State Government to consider the most appropriate operational model for management of Bush Fire Brigades, which may include the establishment of an independent Rural Fire Service, as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report.*

In addition, the following has been provided for Zone Delegates information:

- WALGA [2026-27 State Budget Submission](#) included advocacy to –
  - Boost funding for emergency services volunteers
  - Invest in Local Government Bushfire mitigation
  - Invest in reducing disaster risk
- WALGA's [State Election Priorities 2025](#) includes relevant advocacy for Emergency Services Funding and Consolidated Emergency Services Act.
- WALGA Submission to Worksafe Statutory Review of WHS Act 2020 (Attached with Agenda)
- Local Government Safety Obligations to Bushfire Volunteers (LGISWA) (Attached with Agenda)

The Zone may wish to discuss options for advancing advocacy on Firefighting / Funding / OHS Obligations / BF Act outdated.

***The Zone AGREED to defer consideration of this item to the next Zone meeting***

## **8.2.2 Zone Strategic Priority 1: Cost shifting and responsibility transfer without funding or policy frameworks**

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### **BACKGROUND**

At the April 2026 meeting, the Zone discussed Strategic Priority 1: Cost shifting and responsibility transfer without funding or policy frameworks (as identified at the February 2026 strategic planning workshop).

At that meeting, the Zone agreed to:

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

5. *Request the Zone Secretariat prepare an item for consideration at the June Zone meeting, detailing the options for the Zone to fund and facilitate a consultancy to prepare a report on cost shifting to Local Governments.*

## **COMMENT**

An update on each of the agreed actions is provided below:

### Action 1

A letter was sent to all WALGA Zones from Zone Chair, Cr Scott Crosby on 20 May. A copy of that letter is attached.

At the time of writing one response has been received from the Goldfields-Esperance Country Zone ( Action 1a - Letter Attached). Peel and South West Country Zones have the item on their June Agendas for discussion.

### Action 2

*DFES Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM is attending to speak to the Zone at this meeting. (see [Agenda item 4.2](#)).*

### Action 3

In early 2024, the Central Country Zone initiated a piece of work to gather data from Zone Members relating to examples of cost shifting where State and Commonwealth services are now being provided by Local Governments. This had been a major topic of discussion and concern for the Zone, as Members believed that cost shifts (such as providing housing, doctors, aged care, etc.) and increasing compliance requirements were placing undue pressure on Local Government resources in the region.

To capture this data, a survey was distributed to all 15 Central Country Zone Local Governments asking for:

- Examples of cost shifting, where State and Commonwealth services are now being provided by Local Governments and the cost of providing these services.
- Examples of current compliance requirements and the cost involved.

From the survey responses, the Zone was able to calculate the average impost of cost shifting across the 12 respondent Local Governments as a percentage of rate income. A similar calculation was done for rate income spent on areas considered compliance items.

Based on the above, the Zone engaged an independent consultant (Caroline Robinson and Darren Mollenoyux of 150Square) to more thoroughly review the survey responses, focusing on the top cost shifting and compliance costs identified by respondent Local Governments. The brief for the consultants was to analyse cost shifting, compliance costs, and under-recovery of statutory fees across Local Governments in the Zone. The goal of the work was to determine financial impacts and inform advocacy efforts for more sustainable Local Government funding.

The work of 150Square included data review, direct engagement with all Local Governments in the Zone, conducting an additional survey to collect more information, attending Zone and Executive Committee meetings, and ultimately providing the final report. In total, the costs incurred for this work was **\$7,500 incl. GST**.

The Zone Secretariat have reached out to Caroline at 150Square to discuss potentially engaging her for the Great Southern Country Zone's proposed work. Caroline confirmed she would be able to complete the work for the Zone, but suggested a different approach

to that used for the Central Country Zone. As Great Southern is comprised of a mixture of Bands 1, 3 and 4 Local Governments with a range of different experiences with cost-shifting (while Central Country is all Band 4 Local Governments, except one Band 3), a consolidated report for the region would be difficult. Instead, the report could present particular case studies from the Zone.

#### Action 4

The Zone Secretariat wrote to all CEOs asking them to provide examples of cost shifting to their Local Government, including a monetary value and resourcing impact details where possible. Responses were received from 9 Local Governments. A summary of the responses received is included below. A report detailing each response in full is included as an attachment – [Attachment 4](#).

The overall message emerging from the Zone Member examples is clear and consistent: **Local Governments in the Great Southern region are carrying responsibilities that properly belong to State or Commonwealth governments, and the financial burden is growing unsustainably.** The most common themes are:

Theme	Why it dominates
Emergency services & bushfire management	High cost, high risk, universal burden
Health services / GP support	Major rural service gap, expensive, growing
Roads & transport infrastructure	Large networks + freight loads + underfunding
Tourism & regional facilities	State-driven demand, local-funded impacts

#### Action 5

If the Zone were to engage a consultant to prepare a report on the imposts of cost shifting on Local Governments in the region, the cost of the work could be split between Zone Members equally or on the basis of size. Using the same overall process and scope of work as the Central Country Zone with 150Square, the Zone can expect a similar cost of \$7,500 incl. GST for the work.

### **RESOLUTION**

**Moved: President Cr Kate Johnston**

**Seconded: President Cr Roger Bilney**

**That the Great Southern Country Zone:**

- 1. Provide in principle approval for the Zone Executive Officer to engage a consultant to prepare a report on the imposts of cost shifting on Local Governments in the region.**
- 2. Instruct the Zone Executive Officer to request a quote from 150Square to complete the work on cost shifting.**
- 3. Appoint the following Zone Members to a Working Group to provide input into the process going forward:**
  - Cr Aaron Wiggins**
  - Cr Kristy D'Aprile**
  - Cr Rebecca O'Meehan**
  - Cr Kate Johnston**
  - Cr Scott Crosby**

**CARRIED**

## 9 WALGA STATE COUNCIL BUSINESS

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### 9.1 STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

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Great Southern Country Zone State Council representative Cr Scott Crosby provided an update on State Council activities since the last Zone meeting.

**Noted**

### 9.2 STATE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA – MATTERS FOR DECISION

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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.

#### 9.2.1 Climate Change Advocacy Position

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

##### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A new climate change Advocacy Position is proposed to replace the position endorsed by State Council in 2018.
- WALGA released a Consultation Paper and draft Climate Change Advocacy Position in January 2026 for Council endorsed feedback by 1 May 2026.
- 39 Council endorsed submissions and two officer level comments were received:
  - 18 (44%) supported the draft Position.
  - 18 (44%) supported the draft Position with comments and/or proposed changes.
  - four (10%) did not support the draft Position and proposed an alternative.
  - one (2%) did not support the Advocacy Position.
- The draft Advocacy Position has been refined in response to the feedback received, noting that the majority of submissions either supported the draft position in its entirety or supported with comment and/or amendment:
  - *"to meet the needs of their communities"* has been added to Point 1 to better reflect Local Government context.
  - Point 2b has been revised to:
    - Include explicit reference to increasing risk and expanded legislative requirements and align with language in the *Local Government Act* (mitigation, rather than emissions reduction).
    - Be clear that Local Government must be provided with the funding, guidance and practical support required to meet increasing risk and legislative requirements.
- At its meeting on 25 May 2026, the Environment Policy Team considered this item and recommended that State Council replace the current Climate Change Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 4.1 with the new Advocacy Position.

## ATTACHMENT

- [Climate Change Advocacy Position Consultation Report](#)

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item aligns with WALGA's Strategic Pillars:

- **Influence:** Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government and lead policy development for the Local Government sector.
- **Support:** Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that the [Climate Change Policy Statement](#) and **current** Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change as follows:

*Local Government acknowledges:*

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

*Local Government is committed to addressing climate change.*

*Local Government is calling for:*

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

be **replaced** with (changes following consultation underlined):

1. *Local Government acknowledges the risks associated with, and is committed to addressing, climate change to meet the needs of their communities.*
2. *WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to:*
  - a. *provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination and action to ensure an orderly transition to achieve emission reduction targets and address the impacts of climate change.*
  - b. *ensure that Local Government has the funding, guidance and practical support required to meet increasing risk and expanded legislative requirements to plan for, mitigate and adapt to climate impacts.*

## BACKGROUND

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

- The national *Climate Change Act 2022* and the Western Australian Climate Change Bill 2023.
- Increased legislative responsibilities, including the *Local Government Amendment Act 2023*, which expanded Western Australian Local Governments' general function under Part 3 s3.1(1A) of the *Local Government Act 1995*:
  - a. To promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the district;

- b. To plan for, and to plan for mitigating, risks associated with climate change; and
- c. In making decisions, to consider potential long-term consequences and impacts on future generations
- The release of the Australian Government's [National Climate Risk Assessment](#) and [National Adaptation Plan](#) in 2025.
- Escalation of the transition to renewable energy, uptake of electric vehicles and energy efficiency standards under the National Construction Code.
- Climate science and projections ([international](#), [national](#) and [WA specific](#)) have also become clearer regarding the risks posed by climate change and the need for action to address the consequential impacts.

Work commenced on the review of the current position in 2024. An updated draft position was considered at the March 2025 State Council meeting, with the position referred back to the Environment Policy Team for further development. In January 2026, WALGA released a Consultation Paper and draft Advocacy Position, with Council endorsed feedback requested by 1 May 2026.

## COMMENT

Responses were received from 41 Local Governments, 39 Council endorsed submissions and two officer level comments (Karratha and Melville):

- 18 (44%) supported the draft Advocacy Position:
  - Metropolitan: Joondalup, Stirling, Bayswater, Kalamunda, Bassendean, Canning, Cockburn, Melville, Rockingham, Cambridge, Subiaco and Serpentine Jarrahdale.
  - Regional: Harvey, Victoria Plains, Gnowangerup, Kalgoorlie Boulder, Ngaanyatjaraku and Karratha.
- 18 (44%) were supported with comment and/or proposed changes:
  - 7 sought minor wording refinements or small additions:
    - Metropolitan: Belmont, Gosnells and Kwinana.
    - Regional: Dumbleyung, West Arthur, York and Mingenew.
  - 11 proposed more substantial amendments:
    - Metropolitan: Mundaring, Armadale, Victoria Park, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Perth and Vincent.
    - Regional: Augusta Margaret River, Busselton, Kent and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
- Four (10%) did not support the draft Advocacy Position and proposed an alternative position:
  - Regional: Waroona (alternative position). Quairading, Wagin and Cue provided the Central Country Zone position.
- One (2%) did not support the draft Advocacy Position and did not provide an alternative:
  - Regional: Collie.

Responses were received from Local Governments across all Metropolitan Zones and from all but two Country Zones.

Across both metropolitan and regional submissions, Local Governments emphasised that the roles and responsibilities of each level of government in climate change mitigation and adaptation remain unclear, while legislative obligations placed on Local Governments have expanded without a sustainable funding model to support implementation. Small, rural and remote Local Governments raised concerns about their communities' heightened exposure to heat, extreme weather and infrastructure failure, combined with limited local capacity and resources to respond effectively.

The draft Advocacy Position has been refined in response to the feedback received, noting that the majority of submissions either supported the draft position in its entirety or supported with comment and/or amendment:

- *"to meet the needs of their communities"* has been added to Point 1 to better reflect Local Government context.
- Point 2b has been revised to:
  - Include explicit reference to increasing risk and expanded legislative requirements and align with language in the Local Government Act (mitigation, rather than emissions reduction).
  - Be clear that Local Government must be provided with the funding, guidance and practical support required to meet increasing risk and legislative requirements.

The Position has been kept high level, noting that many of the specific matters raised in the feedback are included in other WALGA Advocacy Positions (or will be incorporated when these positions are reviewed) and/or will inform WALGA's more detailed climate advocacy.

A [Climate Change Advocacy Position Consultation Report](#) providing a summary of feedback received and rationale for the changes to the position is attached.

At its meeting on 25 May 2026, the Environment Policy Team considered this item and recommended that State Council replace the existing Climate Change Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 4.1 with the new Climate Change Advocacy Position.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace the Climate Change Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 4.1 with a new Climate Change Advocacy Position as follows:

1. *Local Government acknowledges the risks associated with, and is committed to addressing, climate change to meet the needs of their communities.*
2. *WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to:*
  - a. *Provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination and action to ensure an orderly transition to achieve emission reduction targets and address the impacts of climate change.*
  - b. *Ensure that Local Government has the funding, guidance and practical support required to meet increasing risk and expanded legislative requirements to plan for, mitigate and adapt to climate impacts.*

#### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Paul Terry  
**Seconded:** President Cr Perin Mulcahy

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

**CARRIED**

## 9.2.2 Train Station Precincts Advocacy Position

*By Coralie Claudio, A/Manager Planning and Building*

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In November 2025, the State Government [announced](#) it would commence the preparation of Improvement Plans and Improvement Schemes for ten train station precincts across the Perth metropolitan region.
- A new Train Station Precinct Advocacy Position is proposed, which identifies the need for collaborative, place-based, and infrastructure-led precinct planning that enables housing delivery while respecting local planning frameworks and maintaining community confidence, supported by strong State Government coordination and funding.
- The position is intended to support timely and direct engagement with the State Government on sector priorities for current and future State-led train station precincts.
- The draft position has been informed by a review of Council resolutions and feedback from Local Governments, including those associated with the initial ten identified train station precincts.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed the position at its meeting on 18 May 2026.

### ATTACHMENT

- [Rationale New Advocacy Position: Train Station Precincts](#)

### STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item aligns with WALGA's Strategic Pillars:

- **Influence** – Lead advocacy on issues that are important to Local Government, including coordinated precinct planning and housing delivery.
- **Support** – Anticipate, understand, and respond to Member needs, ensuring Local Governments are effectively engaged in State-led precinct planning processes.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that the **new** Train Station Precincts Advocacy Position be **endorsed**.

This draft position is consistent with, and builds upon, Advocacy Position 6.1 Planning Principles and Reform:

1. *The Local Government sector supports an efficient and effective planning system guided by legislation, policy, and processes that:*
  - a. *facilitates the creation of sustainable and liveable communities and places;*
  - b. *has a focus on strategic planning that delivers on long-term objectives and outcomes that balance social, environmental, cultural, and economic interests;*
  - c. *is easy to understand, accessible and transparent;*
  - d. *recognises the diversity of Western Australia and ensures that local environment, context, communities and character are appropriately reflected in planning frameworks and decision making;*
  - e. *ensures decisions are made by the level of government closest to and most impacted by a planning proposal; and*
  - f. *establishes consistent planning frameworks and streamlines planning processes where there is a demonstrated benefit in doing so.*
2. *Reforms to the planning system should:*
  - a. *be guided by the above principles;*
  - b. *deliver community benefit;*

- c. promote system efficiency, including through the use of technology;*
- d. be evidence-based and informed by robust, transparent data;*
- e. proceed at an appropriate pace to enable effective implementation;*
- f. be informed by engagement with the community; and be amended only with WALGA involvement and consultation with Local Government.*

## **BACKGROUND**

Planning around train stations, including the establishment of local planning frameworks and the determination of development applications, has historically been the responsibility of Local Governments.

In November 2025, the State Government announced it was commencing the establishment of Improvement Plans and Schemes around ten train station precincts across the Perth metropolitan region to streamline planning and development and facilitate housing development. Through this process, the State would become responsible for setting planning frameworks, including elements such as height and zoning, and determining development applications.

The ten station precincts, involving 14 directly affected Local Governments, are listed below:

- Ballajura (City of Swan);
- Bassendean (Town of Bassendean);
- Carlisle/Oats Street (Town of Victoria Park);
- Claisebrook (City of Perth and City of Vincent);
- Cottesloe (Town of Cottesloe and Shire of Peppermint Grove);
- Glendalough (City of Vincent and City of Stirling);
- Morley (City of Bayswater);
- Mosman Park (Town of Mosman Park and Shire of Peppermint Grove);
- Redcliffe (City of Belmont); and
- Swanbourne (Town of Claremont, City of Nedlands and Town of Cottesloe).

Improvement Plans and Schemes for the Ballajura and Redcliffe stations were already underway prior to this announcement. Importantly, the announcement noted these were only the first stations, indicating additional state-led station precincts may be identified in the future.

At its December 2025 meeting, State Council resolved that:

- 1. State Council request WALGA to prepare an Advocacy Position in consultation with Members, regarding the transport and planning principles required to ensure quality outcomes in the newly announced "Station Precinct Improvement Plans and Schemes" in Metropolitan Perth and regional stations if included.*
- 2. The Advocacy Position will include transport and place-making outcomes on both government controlled and private land that maximise liveability and use of the public transport network.*

*RESOLUTION 069.5/2025*

To inform the development of the Advocacy Position, WALGA sought feedback from Local Governments associated with the initial ten station precincts, including collecting and reviewing relevant Council reports and resolutions from ten Local Governments.

The draft position supports a coordinated approach to station precinct planning and makes the following key recommendations to support effective development and implementation of Improvement Plans and Schemes:

- Promote housing density, diversity and delivery while ensuring place-responsive and transit-oriented development outcomes.
- Recognise the State Government's critical role in coordination and investment, including redevelopment of underutilised State land.
- Call for recognition of existing and progressing local planning frameworks and meaningful engagement with Local Governments and communities.
- Support a strategic, evidence-based and transparent approach to identifying and delivering future State-led station precincts.

The draft advocacy position was circulated to the sector for feedback over a two-week period until 7 May. WALGA received 22 responses, all from metropolitan Local Governments, including nine of the 14 Local Governments directly affected by the initial ten identified train station precincts.

### **COMMENT**

This Advocacy Position is intended to enable WALGA to make timely and direct representations to the State Government on the sector's priorities for State-led train station precincts.

The proposed new Advocacy Position will complement WALGA's planning Advocacy Position, 6.1 Planning Principles and Reform, which notes that planning frameworks and decision-making should reflect local environment, context, communities and character, and that decisions should be made by the level of government closest to and most impacted by a planning proposal.

The draft position has been informed by a review of relevant Council resolutions and Local Government officer input, including feedback from WALGA's Planning Advisory Group.

The draft advocacy position was refined following sector consultation to emphasise that a planning framework alone will not deliver on-the-ground outcomes. Instead, it highlights the substantial scale of State Government collaboration, coordination and funding required to enable and accelerate precinct delivery, including a stronger focus on the redevelopment of underutilised State Government land.

The position was also refined to avoid blanket support for all State Improvement Plans and Schemes, instead clarifying the circumstances in which State-led planning may be appropriate for future station precincts.

The Environment Policy Team recommended that State Council endorse the position at its meeting on 18 May 2026.

## WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the following new Advocacy Position:

### *Train Station Precincts*

1. *Local Government supports a coordinated approach to the planning and development of train station precincts that is transport-orientated, place responsive and provides for increased housing density and diversity.*
2. *In developing Train Station Precinct Improvement Plans and Schemes the State Government should:*
  - a. *Respect, acknowledge and build on existing and progressing local planning frameworks.*
  - b. *Ensure effective collaboration, partnerships and coordination across Government agencies and with Local Government.*
  - c. *Prioritise redevelopment of State-owned land to deliver optimal housing and mixed-use outcomes.*
  - d. *Undertake meaningful and ongoing community engagement.*
  - e. *Directly fund and/or implement funding mechanisms to deliver public realm and infrastructure requirements.*
3. *Decisions on any future State-led train station precincts must be evidence-based, transparent and made in consultation with Local Government.*

## RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Paul Terry  
**Seconded:** President Cr Kate Johnston

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

**CARRIED**

### 9.2.3 Submission on the Cat Act Review

*By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste and Felicity Morris, Manager Governance and Procurement*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 13 February 2026 the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) opened consultation on the second statutory review of the *Cat Act 2011* (the Cat Act).
- All elements of the Cat Act are under review, including registration, enforcement/compliance, sterilisation, microchipping, breeding and limits on the number of cats.
- WALGA used current Advocacy Positions, previous submissions, a webinar with the sector and opportunity to comment on a draft submission to gather feedback.
- The submission identifies that reform to the legislation is required, in relation to:
  - Consolidation of the Cat Act and *Dog Act 1976*;
  - Stronger provisions for consistent non-compliance;
  - Clear definitions for owned and unowned cats;
  - Development of a Model Cat Local Law;

- A limit on the number of cats; and
- Lowering the age of sterilisation.
- Consultation by LGIRS closes at 5:00pm on Monday, 31 August 2026.
- A joint meeting of the Governance and Environment Policy Teams on 25 May 2026 recommended that State Council endorse the submission.

## ATTACHMENT

- [Submission on the Review of the \*Cat Act 2011\*](#) (and included below)

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item aligns with WALGA's Strategic Pillars:

- **Influence:** Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government and lead policy development for the Local Government sector.
- **Support:** Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This submission has been developed based on current WALGA [Advocacy Positions](#):

- 2.12.1 Review of the *Cat Act 2011* and *Dog Act 1976*; and
- 2.12.2 Dog and Cat Management.

And previous submissions and positions on the legislation.

## BACKGROUND

On 13 February 2026, the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) opened [consultation](#) on the review of the *Cat Act 2011* (the Cat Act), the second statutory review of the legislation. The previous review was undertaken in 2019. The Cat Act provides for the control and management of cats and aims to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of cats, and for related matters.

As articulated in the Second Reading Speech, the Cat Act was introduced with the aim to reduce the number of stray cats being euthanised each year, encourage responsible cat ownership and provide for better management of the unwanted impacts of cats on the community and environment.

The submission provides recommendations on provisions in the Cat Act and identifies some of the issues Local Governments experience with implementing the legislation. WALGA used current Advocacy Positions, previous submissions, a webinar with the sector and opportunity to comment on a draft submission to gather feedback.

The webinar, held on 26 March 2026, had 61 registrations from Local Government. Feedback was received, and incorporated, on the draft submission.

The submission was considered, and is recommended to State Council for endorsement, by a joint meeting of the Governance and Environment Policy Teams on 25 May 2026.

## COMMENT

In this submission WALGA has identified several areas where reform to the legislation is required, including:

- Consolidation of the Cat Act and *Dog Act 1976*;
- Stronger provisions for consistent non-compliance;
- Clear definitions for owned and unowned cats;
- Development of a Model Cat Local Law;
- A limit on the number of cats; and

- Lowering the age of sterilisation.

In drafting the submission, WALGA has also identified implementation challenges for the sector in particular low registration rates for cats, the lack of a centralised database for registration and limited resourcing.

Cat containment is out of scope of this submission, as the State Government is progressing the [Cat Amendment \(Local Laws\) Bill 2026](#) to enable Local Governments to make cat containment Local Laws. WALGA is engaging separately with the sector on this matter.

#### WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the submission on the Review of *Cat Act 2011*.

#### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Rebecca O'Meehan  
**Seconded:** President Cr Len Handasyde

**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**

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### 9.3 OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

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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.

#### 9.3.1 WALGA 2025 Local Government Emergency Management Survey Findings – State Council Agenda Item 10.1

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The 2025 WALGA Local Government Emergency Management Survey, undertaken in partnership with Edith Cowan University (ECU), highlights ongoing resource, workforce and funding pressures across the Local Government sector, including rising emergency management expectations, structural funding challenges, grant access difficulties, and increasing staffing and capacity constraints.

An additional confidential attachment was available for Zone Delegates.

**Noted**

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## 9.4 ADDITIONAL ZONE RESOLUTIONS – APRIL ROUND

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At the April Zone meeting, Delegates discussed the visibility of resolutions from other Zones around the state. All Additional Zone Resolutions are listed at the end of State Council Minutes, available on the [WALGA website](#).

To assist Zone Delegates, all resolutions from the previous round of Zone meetings requesting action from WALGA or State Council will be listed in future Great Southern Country Zone Agendas.

The following list includes all Additional Zone Resolutions from the April 2026 round of Zone meetings. State Council resolved that all these resolutions be referred to the relevant WALGA Portfolio for consideration and appropriate action.

### **EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy Portfolio)**

#### **Rating of Social and Affordable Housing**

That the East Metropolitan Zone requests WALGA to:

1. obtain legal advice as to whether the provision of affordable housing is likely to fall within the meaning of the relief of poverty for the purposes of section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act*. If not, obtain legal advice as to whether the minority provision of social housing within a mixed social/affordable housing development alters the position;
2. seek interest of like-minded Local Governments to identify and fund a suitable test case through the SAT and potentially Supreme Court; and
3. advocate to the State Government to agree to require all Community Housing Providers fund the payment of Local Government rates for affordable housing.

### **EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy Portfolio)**

#### **Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund**

That the East Metropolitan Zone request WALGA to:

1. Launch a public advocacy campaign, as a matter of priority, requesting the State Government restart the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) for the 2026/27 financial year; and
2. The campaign should showcase the benefits of the CSRFF and the reliance the Local Government sector has on this funding.

### **CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE (Member Services Portfolio)**

#### **Urgent Advocacy: Forest Products Commission (FPC) “Rates-Equivalent” Payments Diverted to State Treasury – Immediate Local Government Budget Impacts (2025/26)**

That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to advocate as a matter of urgency, prior to the Local Government Budget cycle, to the State Government (including the Treasurer, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Forestry) to:

1. Establish a formal cross-portfolio arrangement (Treasury/Local Government/Forestry, with WALGA and affected Local Governments) to:
  - a. confirm a transparent method for calculating and timing the rates-equivalent amounts under the current legislative settings; and
  - b. implement an agreed mechanism to allocate and remit the rates-equivalent payments to the impacted Local Governments from 2026/27 onward.
2. Provide impacted Local Governments with certainty and forward estimates regarding:
  - a. the FPC’s land acquisition / plantation expansion trajectory; and

- b. modelling of the projected financial impact on affected rating bases, so Councils can undertake responsible long-term financial planning.
3. (If required) Progress options for policy and/or legislative amendment to ensure ongoing equity and financial sustainability for communities hosting FPC freehold landholdings, including ensuring outcomes that do not unfairly transfer costs to remaining ratepayers.

#### **CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE (Infrastructure Portfolio)**

##### **Ministerial Decision to Allow Heavier Loads on Local Government Roads**

That the Central Country Zone:

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

#### **GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE (Member Services Portfolio)**

##### **Forest Products Commission (FPC) Rates Equivalent Payments – Treasury Remittance Uncertainty and Local Government Budget Impact**

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

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

#### **GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE (Infrastructure Portfolio)**

##### **RAV Network Accredited Mass Management Scheme (Level 3) – Ministerial Decision Enabling Heavier Loads on Selected Local Roads**

That the Great Southern Country Zone:

1. Notes the Ministerial decision to temporarily upgrade RAV networks to AMMS Level 3 on Local Government roads.
2. Expresses concern that the decision was made without consultation with Local Governments or WALGA.
3. Requests WALGA advocate to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads Western Australia seeking clarification on:
  - a. risk assessments without route-specific road safety or asset capacity assessment for Local Government roads,
  - b. compliance and enforcement arrangements,

- c. duration and process for revocation of the upgrade,
  - d. opt-out options for Local Government roads,
  - e. when the intervention will cease to apply; and
  - f. additional funding support for impacted Local Government road assets.
4. Requests GSCZ Secretariat write to the Minister for Transport expressing the Zone's concerns and requesting clarification as detailed in parts 2 and 3 above.

**MURCHISON COUNTRY ZONE (Advocacy Portfolio)**

**WALGA State Government Advocacy Partnership Review**

That the WALGA Murchison Country Zone:

1. Notes the Murchison Executive Group's 'WALGA State Government Advocacy Partnership Review' report.
2. Recognises the importance of a strong and structured partnership between the Western Australian State Government and the Local Government sector.
3. Requests WALGA State Council to undertake a review of successful Local–State Government partnership models operating in other Australian jurisdictions, including the Queensland 'Equal Partners in Government' agreement.
4. Advocates for the development of a comparable partnership framework in Western Australia that recognises Local Government as an equal partner in governance and establishes clear mechanisms for consultation, collaboration and regional input into State policy and legislative reform

**NORTH METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy Portfolio)**

**Building Surveyor Qualifications**

That WALGA engage with the relevant Ministers to ensure future qualification pathways are established to support individuals to train and obtain registration, at minimum, as a Level 2 Building Surveyor with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in Western Australia.

**NORTH METROPOLITAN ZONE (Infrastructure Portfolio)**

**Advocacy for Increased State Government Funding for the Targeted Underground Power Program (TUPP)**

That the North Metropolitan Zone support, and subsequently WALGA State Council, strengthen and expand the advocacy position on underground power to advocate for increased State Government funding for the TUPP initiative and even spread of the initiative throughout the Perth Metropolitan area.

**NORTHERN COUNTRY ZONE (Member Services / Policy / Infrastructure Portfolios)**

**WALGA Bulk Procurement – Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellite Connectivity for Volunteer Bushfire Vehicles**

That the Northern Country Zone:

1. Request WALGA to investigate and scope a sector wide procurement solution, through the Preferred Supplier Program, for Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite connectivity for Volunteer Bush Fire Vehicles, including but not limited to:
  - o Starlink Mini hardware and associated business/government grade data plans (e.g. Local Priority plans); and
  - o Integrated “vehicle as a node” platforms such as HyphaONE Mini that combine LEO satellite, 4G/5G, Wi Fi and mesh networking in a single emergency services ready unit.
2. Request WALGA to consult with DFES, Local Governments and relevant emergency services stakeholders to:

- Define standard technical, installation and cyber security requirements for LEO satellite equipment on volunteer bush fire appliances; and
  - Identify preferred commercial models for ongoing user fees (for example, pooled data plans, fleet wide contracts or regional cost sharing arrangements).
3. Request WALGA to report back to Zones and State Council with options and recommendations, including indicative pricing, contract structures and implementation pathways, to enable interested Local Governments to access LEO satellite solutions for their Volunteer Bush Fire Vehicles via the Preferred Supplier Program and, where appropriate, to utilise the \$20,000 BGU one off grant funding being administered by DFES.
  4. Request WALGA to advocate to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and relevant partners for the ongoing operational costs of Starlink services to be funded on a continuing basis through the Emergency Services Levy (ESL).

### **SOUTH METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy Portfolio)**

#### **Request for Fertiliser**

That the South Metropolitan Zone requests WALGA directly engage with Minister Jarvis regarding supply of fertiliser for Local Government across WA and requests increased communication regarding ongoing fertiliser supply.

### **SOUTH EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE (Advocacy Portfolio)**

#### **The Establishment of Mayors, Presidents and Councillors Association**

That WALGA provides a report to State Council containing a business case for the establishment of a subsidiary WALGA Elected Members Association for Western Australian Mayors, Presidents and Councillors.

### **SOUTH EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE (Advocacy Portfolio)**

#### **Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (WA) 2026 Determination**

That the South East Metropolitan Zone request that, with respect to the *2026 Local Government CEO and Elected Council Member Determination*, WALGA:

1. conducts consultation with the Local Government sector and subsequently presents a report to State Council advocating for changes to the Elected Council Member ICT Allowance in the 2027 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination including, but not restricted to the following:
  - a. that the annual \$3,500 ICT allowance be significantly increased;
  - b. that where ICT equipment is supplied to Elected Council Members by the Local Government, that *the allowance is not to be reduced by the cost of the supplied ICT equipment.*
2. Writes to the Chair of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal objecting to the generalisations made in paragraphs 46 and 47 of the *2026 Local Government CEO and Elected Council Member Determination preamble* and advises that, contrary to the comments contained in the Tribunal's determination, the role of Mayors and President (particularly in Band 1 and 2 Councils) is commensurate with full-time employment, and that the "work value" of elected council members is often equivalent to or exceeds that of Members of Parliament.
3. Seeks a meeting with the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Chair to articulate in person the matters outlined in 1 and 2.

### **SOUTH EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy Portfolio)**

#### **Social Cohesion Grants Program**

That the South East Metropolitan Zone recommends that WALGA advocate to the State Government to establish a Social Cohesion Grants Program.

#### **SOUTH WEST COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)**

##### **CSRFF And Playon WA Funding – Lack of Clarity on Future Rounds**

That the South West Country Zone:

1. notes the current lack of clarity regarding the timing and structure of future Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund and Club Night Lights Program funding rounds; and
2. requests WALGA to advocate to the State Government for the provision of clear and timely information on future funding programs, including anticipated timelines, program structure and any proposed changes to funding criteria, to support effective Local Government planning and delivery of community sporting infrastructure.

#### **SOUTH WEST COUNTRY ZONE (Infrastructure Portfolio)**

##### **Management of Water Corporation Bridges on Local Government Roads**

That the South West Country Zone request WALGA to advocate to the WA State Government to develop a strategic solution to the asset management of Water Corporation bridges on state and Local Government roads by:

1. acknowledging the significant inadequacy of the current asset management and investment prioritisation associated with Water Corporation bridge assets; and
2. requesting that the State Government establish a dedicated funding program for an urgent bridge renewal program to address community safety and access risks.

#### **SOUTH WEST COUNTRY ZONE (Member Services Portfolio)**

##### **Forest Products Commission (FPC) Rates Equivalent Payments – Treasury remittance uncertainty and Local Government budget impacts**

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

- a. provide urgent written confirmation that the rates-equivalent payments made by the Forest Products Commission to the State under section 43 of the *Forest Products Act 2000* will be remitted in full to the affected Local Governments;
- b. establish, prior to the finalisation of 2026/27 Local Government budgets, a clear, transparent, and ongoing mechanism for the calculation, remittance, and payment of those rates-equivalent amounts to affected Local Governments for 2026/27 and future financial years; and
- c. Work with WALGA and affected Local Governments to develop and implement a fair and sustainable long-term solution, including policy and legislative reform if required, to ensure Local Governments are not financially disadvantaged by future Forest Products Commission land acquisitions.

Noted

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## **9.5 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

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Attachment No. 5 [WALGA President's Report](#)

*WALGA President, Mayor Mark Irwin, presented the President's Report earlier in the meeting, after item 4.1.*

## **10 EMERGING ISSUES/COLLABORATION**

Nil.

## **11 OTHER BUSINESS**

Nil.

## **12 NEXT ZONE MEETING**

The next meeting of the Great Southern Country Zone will be held on Friday, 21 August 2026 at the Shire of Gnowangerup commencing at 10:00am.

## **13 CLOSURE**

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

## ATTACHMENT 1: LGIRS Local Government Division Report - June 2026

[Back to Item 5.4](#)



### Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety

#### Local Government Division Report

May 2026

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#### Local Government Reforms

##### Local Government Inspector

- The Local Government Inspector (the Inspector) formally commenced operations from 1 January 2026.
- The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) also commenced regulations to support the functions and role of the Inspector at this time.
- The Inspector regulations deal with:
  - new requirements for complaints handling;
  - the appointment of monitors;
  - powers of authorised officers of the Inspector; and
  - offences under the *Local Government Act 1995* that may be infringeable.
- A number of consequential amendments were also made to other regulations as a result of these changes.
- For further information visit the Department's website – [Inspector Regulations](#).

##### Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARIC)

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

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



Department of Local Government,  
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## Other Reforms

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

## Reform updates

- Updates on the status of local government reforms will be made well ahead of implementation to provide local governments with an appropriate lead-in time.
- Regarding local government local laws and the proposed Standardised Meeting Procedures Regulations, local governments are encouraged to continue to make local law changes where required for practical or operational purposes.
- Once the Regulations are finalised, they will apply uniformly across the sector and will override any inconsistent provisions in existing local laws.
- Local Governments whose local law was due for review in 2024 prior to the passage of the *Local Government Amendment Act 2024*, are reminded that they have until 7 December 2026 to review their local law by this date or it will lapse.
- The LG Act Reform team can be emailed directly at [actreview@lgirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:actreview@lgirs.wa.gov.au).

## **Model Financial Statements (MFS)**

- The updated model financial statements and guidelines were published on LGIRS website on 14 May 2026. There was an issue with access to one of the templates, which has now been resolved.



Department of **Local Government,  
Industry Regulation and Safety**

### **Non-Financial Asset Valuation Guidelines**

- The [Non-Financial Asset Valuation Guidelines](#) were published on 5 March 2026.
- An LG Alert was published on 1 April 2026, alerting the sector to the publication with an invitation to attend an online presentation providing a summary on the guidelines.
- 99 internal and external stakeholders attended the webinar held on 14 April 2026.

### **Differential Rates**

- Local governments are reminded to ensure applications seeking Ministerial approval are complete and include all required supporting information and any other evidence necessary. Early engagement and complete supporting documentation will assist in timely assessment.
- An LG Alert will be issued to provide guidance to the local government sector, supporting the submission of complete applications and facilitating more streamlined assessment and timely decision making.

### **Local Government Financial Indicators**

- Following the recent publication of the 2023-24 financial year Local Government Financial Indicators, LGIRS are seeking to upload the 2024-25 financial year data to the MyCouncil website.
- LGIRS would like to thank those local governments that validated their workbooks by 30 May 2026. A total of 96 workbooks were received, with 44 workbooks outstanding. LGIRS will finalise the outstanding workbooks by advising, as data validation was not confirmed by the local government, their audited financial statements will be used by LGIRS to validate the data. Grants for Renewal of Assets data was not included as LGIRS does not have access to these records.

### **Local Government Grants Commission**

Financial Assistance Grants funding:

- The total funding allocation to WA local governments for 2025-26 is \$423,375,700 (consisting of \$261,451,711 in general purpose funding and \$161,923,989 in local road funding and special projects) compared to \$400,140,692 in 2024-25. This total includes the advance payment provided in June 2025 to local governments.
- Local governments received their first three quarterly payments of remaining 2025-26 funds in August and November 2025 and February 2026. The final payment will be made in mid-May. The grant schedule is available on the Grants Commission website.
- The Federal Budget was released in May 2026 and has indicated a bring forward payment of 80% of the 2026-27 FA Grants will be paid in the 2025-26 financial year.
- Local governments should note that the bring forward payments are based on 2025-26 data and do not reflect the latest updates in the Grants Commission's calculations. As such the payment does not represent 80% of an individual local government's FA Grant.



Department of Local Government,  
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- If local governments have any other questions regarding their grant allocation, the methodology or wish to make a submission regarding the process of fund allocation, they can be directed to [grants.commission@lgirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:grants.commission@lgirs.wa.gov.au).

## Local Government Advisory Board

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

## Child Safeguarding Project

- LGIRS has continued delivery of an initial series of in person workshops focused on capability uplift in child safeguarding practice within a local government context.
- A further two workshops were hosted on 13 May and 15 May 2026 targeted to metropolitan local governments. A further 2 workshops are scheduled for delivery prior to 30 June, with several workshops planned for delivery prior to June 30 requiring deferral due to a range of factors impacting regional travel.
- The Local Government Child Safety Network Project Reference Group are working to produce a series of animated scenarios tailored to reflect real-life child safeguarding situations within local government contexts. Scenarios will be utilised in ongoing engagement activity.
- LGIRS continue work with the Ombudsman Western Australia as they develop their Scheme of independent oversight for organisations engaged in child related work who will be mandated to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

## Stop Puppy Farming

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



Department of Local Government,  
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## PetsWA

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

## Cat Containment

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

## Off-Road Vehicles

- The State Government is progressing key reforms arising from the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Act 2025*, which was assented to on 22 August 2025.
- The reform program will deliver the following milestones:
  - proclamation of the remaining sections of the ORV Amendment Act;
  - commencement of the ORV Amendment Regulations to give effect to the relevant provisions of the ORV Amendment Act;
  - deployment of DoTDirect system upgrades to enable all ORV transactions, including registration, renewal, and transfers.
- The State Government is targeting the availability of all online transactions in DoTDirect prior to the 2026 annual renewal period.
- Local governments with projects approved under the \$4.8 million Off-road Vehicle Areas Grants Program continue to receive scheduled payments in line with project milestones and funding agreements.
- This includes development of new ORVAs and upgrades to existing areas.
- A second round of the ORVA Grants Program, with a total funding allocation of \$2 million, opened on 28 May 2026.
- Applications will close on 31 August 2026.
- In this second round of funding, eligibility has been expanded to encourage partnerships between local governments, other WA State Government agencies, and incorporated associations.
- Successful projects are expected to be delivered between 1 January 2027 and 31 December 2028.



Department of Local Government,  
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### LGIRS Contacts

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

## ATTACHMENT 2: Zone Status Report - June 2026

[Back to Item 6.2.1](#)

Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update Last Provided	WALGA Contact
24 April 2026 Zone Agenda Item 7.3.4 RAV Network Accredited Mass Management Scheme (Level 3) – Ministerial Decision Enabling Heavier Loads on Selected Local Roads	<p>That the Great Southern Country Zone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Notes the Ministerial decision to temporarily upgrade RAV networks to AMMS Level 3 on Local Government roads.</li> <li>6. Expresses concern that the decision was made without consultation with Local Governments or WALGA.</li> <li>7. Requests WALGA advocate to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads Western Australia seeking clarification on:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. risk assessments without route-specific road safety or asset capacity assessment for Local Government roads,</li> <li>h. compliance and enforcement arrangements,</li> <li>i. duration and process for revocation of the upgrade,</li> <li>j. opt-out options for Local Government roads,</li> <li>k. when the intervention will cease to apply; and</li> <li>l. additional funding support for impacted Local Government road assets.</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. Requests GSCZ Secretariat write to the Minister for Transport expressing the Zone's concerns and requesting clarification as detailed in parts 2 and 3 above.</li> </ol>	<p>Local Government delegates to the State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee (SAC) communicated the concerns raised regarding short and medium term risks arising from the decision to allow more heavier vehicles to access the local road network, without the controls purported to be in place with accredited vehicle operators.</p> <p>Main Roads confirmed that this was a Ministerial decision and to date there is no process in place to review the benefits and the impacts.</p> <p>Delegates were advised that compliance and enforcement activities continue to be undertaken.</p>	June 2026	<p>Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2031</p>
21 November 2025 Zone Agenda Item 8.3.3 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960 – Review	<p>That the WALGA State Council advocate for the State Government to comprehensively review the <i>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960</i> to achieve at least, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. broaden the Act's scope and establish contemporary provisions addressing all modern interfaces between landowners, local governments and the public,</li> <li>2. establish penalties to create a meaningful disincentive for landowner non-compliance with provisions of the Act, and</li> <li>3. enable a local government to impose penalties against livestock owners who consistently allow their livestock to stray and create a nuisance, without the need to first create a local law or initiate a prosecution.</li> </ol>	<p>This item will be referred to the Governance Policy Team for consideration.</p> <p>The Zone will be informed of the outcome.</p>	April 2026	<p>Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager Member Services <a href="mailto:kmartin@walga.asn.au">kmartin@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2051</p>

**ATTACHMENT 2**

<p>24 April 2026 Zone Agenda  <b>Item 7.3.3 Forest Products Commission (FPC) Rates Equivalent Payments – Treasury Remittance Uncertainty and Local Government Budget Impact</b></p>	<p>That the Great Southern Country Zone request WALGA to advocate, as a matter of urgency, to the Western Australian Treasurer, Minister for Forestry and Minister for Local Government to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Establish, prior to the finalisation of 2026/27 Local Government budgets, a clear, transparent, and ongoing mechanism for the calculation, remittance, and payment of those rates-equivalent amounts to affected Local Governments for 2026/27 and future financial years.</li> <li>4. Work with WALGA and affected Local Governments to develop and implement a fair and sustainable long-term solution, including policy and legislative reform if required, to ensure Local Governments are not financially disadvantaged by future Forest Products Commission land acquisitions.</li> </ol>	<p>This item will be referred to the Governance Policy Team for consideration.</p> <p>The Zone will be informed of the outcome.</p>	<p><b>June 2026</b></p>	<p><b>Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager, Member Services</b>  <b>9213 2051</b>  <b>kmartin@walga.asn.au</b></p>
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## ATTACHMENT 3: Zone Action Items - June 2026

[Back to Item 6.2.2](#)

Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
11 April 2025 Item 7.2.1 Zone Strategic Priorities	<p>The Great Southern Country Zone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Writes to responsible Ministers advocating for the Zone's Strategic Priorities.</li> </ol> <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><b>August 2025:</b> Minister's office has remained in contact with the WALGA Secretariat and has been advised of the Zone's 2025 meeting schedule. The Secretariat will advise the Minister's office of the 2026 meeting schedule, once determined by the Zone.</p> <p><b>November 2025:</b> Minister Whitby's office has advised that he will attend the June, August and November Zone meetings for 2026.</p> <p><b>June 2026:</b> Minister Whitby is attending the June Zone meeting and has been provided with the Zone's Strategic Priorities to provide an update since last attending a Zone meeting in June 2025.</p>	COMPLETE	Zone Executive Officer
24 April 2026 Item 6.2.2 Zone Status Report	<p><b>Zone Status Report – April 2026</b></p> <p>The Zone secretariat was requested to follow up with the People and Place Policy Team for feedback as to why the Zone's position (proposed by Shire of Katanning at the Zone meeting on 20 February 2026) regarding Emergency Management Act Consolidation was not taken up as part of WALGA's advocacy.</p>	<p>The People and Place Policy team noted the GSCZ resolution and response at its 19 March meeting.</p> <p>The Zone's request is generally aligned with WALGA's existing advocacy. WALGA is revising its EM advocacy this year, and updates will be proposed to strengthen the wording around our CES Act and related positions. In particular,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We acknowledge that there are escalating operational risks arising from the outdated framework and the State Government needs to reprioritise and expedite the consolidation of the State's EM legislation to address.</i></li> </ul>	COMPLETE	Zone Executive Officer

Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
		<p>WALGA Policy Manager, Emergency Management, Ms Rachel Armstrong will be at the June Zone meeting and can talk further about WALGA's work in this space.</p> <p>WALGA's current advocacy related to the CES Act are positions <i>8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Act</i> and <i>8.10 Management of Bush Fire Brigades</i>. Please refer to <a href="#">Agenda item 7.2.1</a> for the positions in full, or via the <a href="#">WALGA website</a>.</p>		
<p><b>24 April 2026</b> Item 7.2.1 Zone Strategic Priorities Workshop Outcomes</p>	<p>It was AGREED for the Great Southern Country Zone to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write to all WALGA Zones advising of the GSCZ's position on cost shifting and responsibility for transfer without funding or policy frameworks and seeking their support for WALGA advocacy.</li> <li>2. Request that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services provide a senior officer* to speak on the status of the proposed Consolidated Emergency Services Act, including proposals for optional or alternative arrangements for management responsibility of Bush Fire Brigades.</li> <li>3. Liaise with the Central Country Zone to request:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A copy of the consultant brief they used to engage a consultant to prepare a report on cost shifting to Local Government.</li> <li>b. Details of the costs incurred by the Central Country Zone for this consultancy.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Request Zone CEOs to provide the Zone Secretariat with examples of cost shifting to Local Government, including \$value and resourcing impact details where possible.</li> <li>5. Request the Zone Secretariat prepare an item for consideration at the June Zone meeting, detailing the options for the Zone to fund and facilitate a</li> </ol>	<p>Please refer to <a href="#">Agenda item 7.2.2</a> for an update and recommendation for future action.</p>	<p><b>COMPLETE</b></p>	<p>Zone Executive Officer</p>

Great Southern Country Zone – ACTION ITEMS				
ZONE MEETING DATE / ITEM	ZONE RESOLUTION	ZONE RESPONSE	STATUS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
	consultancy to prepare a report on cost shifting to Local Governments.			
<b>24 April 2026</b> Item 7.3.4 Late Item – RAV Network Accredited Mass Management Scheme (Level 3) - Ministerial Decision Enabling Heavier Loads on Selected Local Roads	That the Great Southern Country Zone: 1. Notes the Ministerial decision to temporarily upgrade RAV networks to AMMS Level 3 on local government roads. 2. Expresses concern that the decision was made without consultation with Local Governments or WALGA. 3. Requests WALGA advocate to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads Western Australia seeking clarification on: m. risk assessments without route-specific road safety or asset capacity assessment for local government roads, n. compliance and enforcement arrangements, o. duration and process for revocation of the upgrade, p. opt-out options for local government roads, q. when the intervention will cease to apply; and r. additional funding support for impacted local government road assets. 4. Requests the Zone Secretariat to write to the Minister for Transport expressing the Zone's concerns and requesting clarification as detailed in parts 2 and 3 above.	Point 2 was referred to State Council. All future updates on this request will be provided in the Zone Status Report.  In relation to point 4, a letter was sent to the Minister of Transport. A copy of the letter is attached with the Agenda. Any response received will be provided back to the Zone.	<b>COMPLETE</b>	Zone Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT 4: GSCZ Cost Shifting Examples

[Back to Item7.2.2](#)

Local Government	Example	CEO
Albany	<p>One of the most significant areas of cost shifting for the City of Albany is the breadth of regional-scale services delivered at a local government level, often without commensurate State or Commonwealth funding. <b>Key examples include:</b></p> <p><b>Health Services (Primary Care Support)</b> While not a formal service provider, the City is increasingly drawn into advocacy, coordination, and support for primary health services (e.g. after-hours GP access), particularly where funding gaps emerge and directly impact the local community. This reflects a broader systemic issue where access to primary care is a Commonwealth responsibility, yet local governments are left managing the consequences of service gaps.</p> <p><b>National Anzac Centre (National Asset Funded Locally)</b> The City owns and operates the National Anzac Centre, a facility of national significance. Despite its national importance, it is largely reliant on entry fees and local ratepayers for operational and renewal costs, creating an equity issue where the Albany community effectively subsidises a national asset.</p> <p><b>Road Network (Scale and Maintenance Burden)</b> The City manages a road network of more than 1,600km across a large geographic area (~4,300km<sup>2</sup>). The ongoing cost of maintaining this regional-scale infrastructure is substantial and not fully matched by external funding, despite its importance to freight, tourism and regional connectivity. Construction costs have escalated rapidly, particularly post Covid and recently due to the fuel crisis.</p> <p><b>Waste Management and Landfill</b> The City is responsible for landfill management, closure obligations, and long-term environmental compliance. These responsibilities continue to expand in cost and regulatory complexity, without proportional funding support from other levels of government.</p>	Mr Andrew Sharpe

	<p><b>Regional Airport</b>  The Albany Regional Airport is critical infrastructure for the Great Southern, supporting emergency services, health access, and economic activity. However, the ongoing operational and capital costs are largely borne by the City, despite delivering a regional and State-level benefit. It is acknowledged that the current \$40M enhancement project will be supported with a funding contribution from both the Federal and State Governments.</p> <p><b>Emergency Services / Bushfire Management</b>  The City supports 16 bushfire brigades with over 800 volunteers. While supported by DFES, the full cost of operating, equipping, and managing these brigades is not covered, resulting in a significant ongoing financial and administrative burden on the City.</p> <p><b>Arts, Culture and Recreation</b>  The City funds and operates significant regional facilities and services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Albany Entertainment Centre (approx. \$500k annual contribution to the State Government)</li> <li>• Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre</li> <li>• Libraries, events, and cultural programming</li> </ul> <p>These facilities serve a much broader regional population but are largely funded through local rates.</p> <p><b>Education and Economic Infrastructure</b>  The City has invested in infrastructure to support tertiary education (e.g. UWA and the Great Southern Universities Centre), which are critical to regional workforce retention but fall outside core local government responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Coastal and Environmental Management</b>  The City manages extensive coastline assets, including beach maintenance, erosion response and environmental clean-up (including whale carcass removals). These are State responsibilities in many respects but require immediate local response and significant funding. The issue of coastal protection and sea level rise are a national issue and should not be the sole responsibility of Local Government.</p> <p><b>Community Safety (Policing Support)</b>  Investment in CCTV and public safety infrastructure continues to grow as the City supports policing outcomes, despite law enforcement being a State responsibility.</p> <p><b>Significant Difference in Service Delivery – Regional vs Metropolitan LGAs</b></p>	
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	<p>Regional local governments such as the City of Albany are required to deliver a significantly broader and more complex range of services compared to metropolitan councils. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining <b>large and dispersed road networks</b> servicing freight, agriculture and tourism, compared to compact metropolitan networks.</li> <li>• Delivering and subsidising <b>regional-level infrastructure</b> (airport, cultural assets, leisure facilities) that service an entire region, not just the local rate base.</li> <li>• Supporting or backfilling <b>essential services gaps</b> (health, emergency services, education infrastructure) that would not typically fall within local government responsibility</li> <li>• Managing <b>extensive environmental and coastal assets</b>, often with higher exposure to natural events and limited external resourcing</li> <li>• Operating with a <b>smaller rate base and lower revenue capacity</b>, despite a higher per capita cost of service delivery</li> <li>• Providing <b>greater community services coverage</b> (recreation, arts, events, libraries) due to the absence of alternative providers in regional areas</li> </ul> <p>In contrast, metropolitan local governments benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher population density and broader rate bases</li> <li>• More compact service areas and infrastructure networks</li> <li>• Greater access to State-delivered services (health, transport, emergency services)</li> <li>• Less requirement to fund or operate regionally significant assets</li> </ul> <p>This creates a structural inequity where regional communities face higher service costs, yet rely on smaller local revenue bases, reinforcing the ongoing issue of cost shifting.</p> <p><b>Summary</b>  The City of Albany delivers a wide range of regional and national-level services that extend beyond traditional local government responsibilities. These services are essential to community wellbeing and economic sustainability; however, the financial burden increasingly falls on local ratepayers without corresponding funding or policy frameworks from other levels of government.</p>	
Cranbrook	We are not too badly off being only a small local government but have had to push back on some costs we were incurring via State Government. For example .....	Ms Linda Grey

	<p>We have maintained the Highway Truck Bay set up on Albany/Great Southern Highways with cleaning, maintenance etc for the last five years with no contribution by Mainroads even though the build came through Mainroads and Road Safety. The funding was a total cost of \$300,000. We pushed back when the agreement came up and they now pay a fair share of the costs. (It was a struggle though).</p> <p>Development WA has twelve blocks of land that are well located (on town sewerage) but of course, a request for the land to come on the market was met with advice that the Shire had to pay for the development. Or alternatively put in for a grant through the Regional Development Assistance Program.</p> <p>We bring a doctor to Frankland River and Cranbrook regularly, but the costs are minimal, and we do advise of these costs through the Grant Return. We run a 0 to 4 program for children and organise specialists (speech and OT) so that children are school ready. It was all Shire funded – not sure how the Shire got involved in this space, but it has been running for nearly 12 years. The last two years have been funded by Amity Health.</p> <p>Regarding illegal land clearing – we reported illegal land clearing in a State Government Reserve where they had knocked down trees that had Carnaby Cockatoo nesting boxes secured, and the complaint came back to us to be dealt with! We had an example recently where DWER knocked back a lamb feedlot because of environmental concerns and then sent the report to us to implement! More engagement by DWER in the local government space would be a bonus – they seem to be still missing in action.</p>	
Denmark	<p>Denmark-specific examples below.</p> <p><b>Tourism Impacts</b>            Tourism is an example of cost shifting where the State’s visitor economy policies actively grow intrastate visitation and support tourism businesses, but the servicing and impact costs fall to Local Government. Denmark regularly accommodates peak visitor numbers more than double our resident population, driving direct operational and asset costs across roads and car parks, waste and litter, public toilets, foreshore/reserve infrastructure, ranger/compliance and visitor safety. However, rates are tied to a small resident rate base and generic state and federal grants do not reflect temporary population loads, and there is</p>	Mr David King

	<p>no practical mechanism for Council to recover these costs from non-ratepayers. The result is a structural mismatch—State benefit and policy intent, local financial burden.</p> <p><b>Health Services - Youth mental health / youth support</b>          Youth mental health and youth support are fundamentally State responsibilities (delivered through State service systems and contracting); however, the Shire is increasingly required to contribute direct cash funding to keep a minimum local service operating. The Shire provides an annual cash contribution to support delivery of the local youth support service, yet service capacity still does not meet community demand, and young people continue to experience limited access compared with metropolitan service coverage.</p> <p><b>Emergency Services</b>          As per Andrew's comments.</p>	
Gnowangerup	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>GP services.</b> The Shire of Gnowangerup has engaged an external organization to provide GP services to the community. This costs \$250k pa cash, plus the provision of a house, motor vehicle and medical practice. In total this costs the Shire approximately \$400k pa. The cost of a GP is a State / Federal responsibility and while there is an allocation within the FA Grant (\$100k pa) this falls well short of the full cost. The GP also provides support to the District Hospital which otherwise would only have nursing staff.</li> <li>2. <b>Community Emergency Safety Manager (CESM).</b> The Shire participates in DFES CESM arrangement which requires cost sharing. This can range from a 50/50 split through to 70/30, the higher amount is borne by the local government and this can be up to \$60k pa. The CESM role is a DFES position, cost of which should be covered by DFES. The CESM is DFES trained, wears a DFES uniform, and drives a vehicle kitted out to DFES specifications.</li> <li>3. <b>Emergency management.</b> Emergency management within Western Australia has progressively evolved into a highly complex operational, governance, and compliance function involving all levels of government. Cost increases are seen in having to have dedicated roles to emergency management which includes administrative roles and front-line roles (CESM and BFRM). For the Shire of Gnowangerup these costs are</li> </ol>	Mr David Nicholson

	<p>approximately \$150k pa. See attached paper which provides details and commentary.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>State Government Housing.</b> The Shire of Gnowangerup has been requested by GROH to provide housing for eight state government employees. While GROH have advised they will pay a premium rent for this accommodation they have also advised they are unable to contribute towards the upfront capital costs, which in the instance are approximately \$8.0m. The Shire has a shortage of teachers, and nurses are primarily agency staff working DIDO and living on-site at the hospital.</li> <li>5. <b>Major arterial roads.</b> The Shire is responsible for a number of roads that are major transport routes. These include Tie Line Road and the Gnowangerup-Tambellup Road. The volume of traffic that use these roads means they should be maintained by Main Roads.</li> <li>6. <b>CCTV.</b> The Shire has a number of CCTV cameras in Gnowangerup that were funded via a grant. However, the ongoing maintenance, upgrades and ultimate replacement is a Shire cost. WAPOL is the sole user of these cameras.</li> <li>7. <b>Public Health Plan (PHP).</b> Local governments are required to have a PHP that supports the States PHP. This must cover things like community health and wellness, drug use, obesity and infectious diseases. These requirements overestimate the resources available to a small local government which means at best you make minor inroads over an extended period. This is to the detriment of the community.</li> <li>8. <b>Data collection.</b> A cost that has become embedded and hidden is the collection of data for other tiers of government. For example, responding to ABS average weekly earnings surveys, and PSC annual collection of staff statistics. The cost incurred includes record keeping (now made more complex under PRIS) and data entry into proprietary systems.</li> <li>9. <b>National Principles for Child Safety - Strengthening child safety.</b> Recently developed legislation following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse imposes child safety standards that must be implemented by local</li> </ol>	
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	<p>governments. There is no argument that child safety is vitally important, the point is, the cost to comply with the new requirements should be offset through an increase in operating grants.</p> <p>10. <b>WHS Act 2020.</b> The WHS Act requires appropriately trained staff in safety. This is a five-day courses that is currently only available in Perth. This means that in addition to a staff member's wages and course fees, the Shire must cover transportation and accommodation.</p>	
<p>Jerramungup</p>	<p>Very similar to other Councils such as Health/Doctors, Roads, Emergency Management, Coastal Infrastructure, Tourism, GROH Housing</p> <p><b>1. Primary Health Care and Medical Services</b>  The Shire of Jerramungup has invested significant resources over many years to attract and retain General Practitioners and maintain access to primary health care services within the district. This has included the provision and maintenance of medical facilities, housing, vehicles, cash component of over \$200,000 per year and other support measures aimed at ensuring ongoing access to medical services for local residents.</p> <p>The provision of primary health care is fundamentally a Commonwealth and State Government responsibility. However, rural local governments increasingly find themselves funding infrastructure, accommodation and support services to prevent the loss of local medical services.</p> <p>Without local government intervention, many small communities would be at risk of losing access to resident doctors, resulting in increased health inequity for regional residents and additional pressure on regional hospitals and emergency services.</p> <p><b>2. Regional Road Network and Freight Infrastructure</b>  The Shire maintains an extensive road network that supports agriculture, freight transport, tourism and regional connectivity. A significant proportion of road usage is generated by heavy vehicles associated with grain transport, livestock movements and regional freight tasks that extend well beyond the Shire boundaries.</p>	<p>Mr Martin Cuthbert</p>

	<p>While roads are critical to State and national economic productivity, funding available to local governments does not keep pace with increasing construction costs, asset renewal requirements and damage caused by heavier freight movements. This creates a substantial financial burden on local ratepayers.</p> <p><b>3. Regional Airport Infrastructure</b> The Shire owns and operates the Jerramungup and Bremer Bay Airstrips, which provide critical infrastructure for Royal Flying Doctor Service operations and Bushfire response aircraft (water bombers).</p> <p>While these services provide significant regional and State-wide benefits, the ongoing maintenance, compliance, capital renewal and operational costs are largely borne by the Shire and its ratepayers.</p> <p>The airport serves a critical role in public safety and emergency response and should attract greater State and Commonwealth funding support commensurate with its broader public benefit.</p> <p><b>4. Emergency Management and Bushfire Services</b> The Shire carries substantial responsibilities for emergency management, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bush Fire Brigade administration and support;</li> <li>Volunteer recruitment and management;</li> <li>Emergency Management Committee administration;</li> <li>Bushfire mitigation activities;</li> <li>Firebreak inspections and enforcement;</li> <li>Emergency response coordination;</li> <li>Recovery operations following emergencies; and</li> <li>Maintenance of firefighting infrastructure and water supplies.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst supported by the Emergency Services Levy and DFES programs, local governments continue to absorb significant administrative, operational and compliance costs associated with emergency management functions.</p>	
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	<p>These obligations continue to expand through legislative and regulatory reforms without corresponding increases in funding or staffing support.</p> <p><b>5. Tourism Infrastructure and Visitor Servicing</b>          The Shire maintains and renews infrastructure that supports a substantial tourism industry, including:          Roads providing access to tourist destinations;          Public toilets;          Caravan and camping facilities;          Coastal and recreational infrastructure;          Visitor information and signage;          Waste management and litter collection; and          Public open space maintenance.</p> <p>Tourism delivers significant economic benefits to Western Australia and is actively promoted by State Government agencies. However, the direct servicing costs associated with visitors are largely borne by local governments despite visitors contributing little to local government revenue.</p> <p>This creates a structural funding imbalance whereby local ratepayers subsidise infrastructure and services used by a much larger transient population.</p> <p><b>6. Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH)</b>          The Shire continues to experience challenges associated with the provision and availability of housing for essential workers, including State Government employees.</p> <p>As is the case in many regional communities, local government is increasingly expected to facilitate, develop or provide housing solutions to support the delivery of essential government services such as health, education, policing and emergency services.</p> <p>The cost of developing and maintaining housing stock is substantial and often falls outside the traditional role of local government. However, without intervention, recruitment and retention of essential workers becomes increasingly difficult.</p>	
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	<p>Housing required for the delivery of State Government services should be supported through expanded Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) programs and dedicated State funding mechanisms rather than reliance on local government resources.</p> <p>The Shire supports further work by the Great Southern Country Zone and WALGA to quantify the financial impact of cost shifting and advocate for sustainable funding arrangements that properly recognise the role regional local governments play in supporting health, emergency management, transport, tourism and essential workforce accommodation.</p>	
Katanning	<p><b>Aerodrome Services</b>          Katanning has a sealed runway that essentially services the RFDS. We are a regional hub and the RFDS has about four flights in and out of Katanning every week to support critical cases. These cases however, are drawn from the region, not just Katanning. Recently, an RFDS plane arriving at Katanning struck a kangaroo and to secure this essential service, we've been given the ultimatum that we must mobilise a staff member, irrespective of the time of day, to confirm there is no wildlife on or near the runway. This comes at a cost of about \$45,000/year and severely disrupts our day-to-day operations.</p> <p>In addition, a recent engineering audit by a CASA contractor has recommended the partial reconstruction &amp; full resealing of just one of our runways and our contracted QS has estimated this will cost about \$750k.</p> <p>Health is a State/Federal responsibility and greater support to maintain regional aerodromes by governments is required.</p> <p><b>Housing</b>          The Katanning Shire leases some of its homes to key government workers because there are insufficient GROH homes available in Katanning. It shouldn't be up to the local government to provide accommodation for government workers and therefore more State Government investment in GROH and key worker housing in Katanning is required.</p> <p><b>Roads</b>          The shire of Katanning is responsible for the upkeep of about 800km of sealed &amp; unsealed roads. It is beyond our means to maintain these roads to the standard demanded by our community via rate revenue and although the State &amp; Federal Governments contribute to our</p>	Mr Peter Klein

	<p>maintenance effort, more funds are required if we are to avoid the catastrophic long-term failure of this infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Bush Fire Brigade Responsibility</b>          As the employer of BFB volunteers, local government CEOs are ultimately responsible for volunteers while on duty including when the incident is controlled by DFES and when our volunteers respond to fires outside of our Shire.</p> <p>As the employer, local government CEOs are exposed to industrial manslaughter risk. Industrial manslaughter is a criminal offence that occurs when a death is proved to have occurred due to the CEO failing their duty of care. Fighting a fire is inherently risky, every year accidents occur on the fire ground so as the employer, the duty of care that we legally owe those volunteers, is a high. Yet as CEOs we are not employed for our knowledge of bushfire response or emergency management.</p> <p>Regional local government CEOs are generally time and staff resource poor and our ability and the ability of our staff to do justice to the duty of care we owe to the volunteers is compromised by the challenge of delivering our other core functions. We literally run out of available bandwidth both our own and our staff.</p> <p>The responsibility for bushfire brigade volunteers should rest elsewhere. It should rest with the organisation that employs firefighters and emergency management professionals. The organisation that has a sole focus on these matters and who is not distracted in delivery of their duty of care by a hundred other priorities that change daily. This duty of care should be provided by the State Government via DFES, as occurs in every other state jurisdiction in Australia.</p> <p><b>Bushfire Brigade Costs</b>          The Bushfire Brigade service provided by local governments should be provided on a cost neutral basis. That is, the Emergency Services Levy should be set so that the cost of managing these brigades is cost neutral to the Council. Unfortunately, this is not the case as bushfire brigade management requires our own source funding to meet our contribution to providing bushfire brigade management, radios for fire control and accommodation facilities. The</p>	
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	<p>Katanning Shire's direct cost of providing bushfire and emergency management services represents about \$150k/annum.</p> <p><b>CCTV</b>          The Shire of Katanning owns and operates a CCTV network that is used every day by the WA Police. We have recently contracted an IT organisation to deliver an asset management plan for our CCTV network and this has recommended a plan worth about \$500k over the next four years. This is well beyond our means and we alternatively believe the State should be at least directly responsible for providing and maintaining the surveillance cameras required by WA Police to enable them to provide the safety service the community expects of them.</p>	
<p>Kent</p>	<p><b>1. Emergency Services Levy (ESL) Administration</b>          Local governments are responsible for issuing the levy on rates notices; collecting payments; debt recovery; handling ratepayer enquiries; administering concessions and instalments; absorbing administration costs          The funds are then forwarded to Department of Fire and Emergency Services and councils effectively become an unpaid collection agency for the State          Local governments also continue to heavily subsidise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• volunteer bushfire brigades</li> <li>• brigade sheds</li> <li>• firefighting water supplies</li> <li>• appliances</li> <li>• PPE</li> <li>• training logistics</li> <li>• fuel and maintenance</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Bushfire Management Obligations</b>          Local governments carry substantial statutory bushfire responsibilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• firebreak inspections</li> <li>• notices and enforcement</li> <li>• volunteer brigade support</li> <li>• bushfire mitigation</li> <li>• emergency coordination</li> <li>• local recovery operations</li> </ul>	<p>Ms Christie Smith</p>

	<p>For Shires like Kent huge land areas; dispersed populations; reliance on volunteers and limited staffing means compliance and emergency management costs consume a disproportionate share of operating budgets.</p> <p><b>3. State Road Freight Task on Local Roads</b>          Heavy agricultural freight, oversized vehicles and increasingly higher mass limits are pushed onto local government roads, yet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• many roads were never designed for these loads</li> <li>• renewal funding does not match deterioration</li> <li>• local governments are responsible for maintenance and safety risks</li> </ul> <p>For the Shire of Kent this means a very large, unsealed road network used for harvest traffic, freight routes servicing agriculture etc creates ongoing unfunded liabilities.</p> <p><b>4. Planning and Development Compliance</b>          The State planning system increasingly requires local governments to administer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development assessment</li> <li>• compliance monitoring</li> <li>• heritage considerations</li> <li>• environmental referrals</li> <li>• advertising processes</li> <li>• SAT matters</li> </ul> <p>However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• statutory timeframes remain strict</li> <li>• specialist planners are expensive</li> <li>• State agencies often have far greater resources than small councils</li> </ul> <p>Small local governments frequently subsidise planning services from general rates revenue because fee income does not cover actual costs.</p>	
Ravensthorpe	<p>One of the ones that jumps out is the provision of Health Services.</p> <p>The Shire of Ravensthorpe currently provides budget support for Doctors and 2 Surgeries is \$290,618 (Direct Cash support to Doctors is \$223,368). We also provide 5 Daw Street 3/1 @ \$18,720pa and we have also just provided 11 days transit accommodation 3/2 for the doctor @ \$1,463 = so another \$20,000 for accommodation.</p>	Ms Nicole O'Neill

	<p>Many rural, remote and very remote local governments are spending significant amounts of ratepayer funds to attract and retain doctors to their communities. This includes providing cash incentives, housing, vehicles, medical facilities, and ongoing operational support. While these efforts are often essential to keep services accessible, local government should not be carrying the cost of primary health care. It is a Commonwealth responsibility</p> <p>The Local Government Rural Health Funding Alliance was formed in Western Australia in late 2024 by six founding local governments. These councils collectively represent around 8,000 residents in the Wheatbelt and Great Southern regions and contribute more than \$1.48m annually to attract and retain GPs, for some this is up to 16% of their annual rates income. The Alliance was formed to address the growing challenge of funding general practice and primary healthcare services in thin markets.</p>	
Plantagenet	<p>Similar to above and additionally, some of our specific examples below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club Development Officer / Every Club Program – constant winding back of funding in this program. This is loss this year of \$11,300, but Katanning, Denmark and Albany had staff so would be a lot more;</li> <li>• CCTV expectations about Number Plate Recognition only / WAPOL access to CCTV systems with no contributions;</li> <li>• Self-Supporting Loan requirements for ESL capital building construction – This coming budget is \$1.5m for 2 fire sheds and \$2,554,365 for SES facility.</li> </ul>	Mr Julian Murphy

# President's Report

## July 2026

### **Political Engagement**

Since assuming the role of WALGA President, I have prioritised engagement with political representatives across key portfolios relevant to the sector. These discussions have been an important opportunity to reinforce WALGA's commitment to working constructively with the State and Australian Governments to achieve better outcomes for local communities and have been well received.

I have recently met with the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister and Shadow Minister for Local Government, as well as Ministers and Shadow Ministers across critical portfolios, including planning and housing, regional development, emergency management and community services. At the Commonwealth level, I have had the opportunity to meet with both the Minister and Shadow Assistant Minister for Local Government. These discussions have been important in understanding policy priorities for the Local Government portfolio post the Federal budget being handed down.

### **State and Federal Budgets**

WA Treasurer Rita Saffioti handed down the State Budget on 8 May 2026. The Budget focusses on addressing key pressures facing the community, with key announcements related to major investments to boost housing supply and affordability, enhance health infrastructure, respond to fuel supply challenges, and ease cost-of-living pressures.

WALGA attended the State Budget Industry Briefing to gain early access to the Budget and distributed a member update that evening highlighting the key initiatives relevant to Local Governments.

WALGA also provided members with a timely briefing outlining key initiatives in the Federal Budget.

### **Media Engagement**

As the authoritative voice for Western Australian Local Government, WALGA continues to engage proactively with the media to advocate on behalf of our Members to drive better outcomes for Local Governments and their communities.

Since the last report, I have continued to highlight the important work that Local Governments deliver to their communities across media interviews with The West Australian, 6PR, ABC Radio, TV and WA Today.

We have 139 Local Governments across the State, largely delivering outstanding services for their local communities. I have been focussed on ensuring this message is being carried in my public comments.

Given recent interest, I have also made comments to [WA Today](#), regarding investment into the management of the polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB).

We will continue to work with the State Government to ensure that Local Government and key stakeholders are equipped to appropriately manage the impact of the PSHB.

### **Local Government Planning Performance**

The 2024–25 Local Government Planning Performance Monitoring Project data released by WALGA in June shows that Local Governments continue to deliver strong planning and building outcomes, despite increased demand.

Across 52 participating Local Governments, representing 92 per cent of Western Australia's population, almost 74,000 applications were determined in 2024–25, a 17 per cent increase on the previous year, with 85 per cent processed within statutory timeframes. This included more than 21,500 development applications, with 98 per cent of these approved under delegated authority. All Local Governments are encouraged to participate in the Project.

### **Emergency Management Survey**

WALGA has released the [2025 Local Government Emergency Management Survey Snapshot](#). Completed by 100 Local Governments across Western Australia, the survey results highlight the sector's continued commitment to strengthening emergency management capability. The findings show that around 90 per cent of Local Governments have maintained or increased investment in this area, while continuing to respond to growing and more complex demands.

Bushfire remains a key focus, with 91 per cent of respondents identifying it as a top hazard. The Survey also confirms the value of established programs such as the Community Emergency Services Manager initiative in supporting capability at the local level. The results reinforce the diverse operating environments across the State and will inform WALGA's ongoing advocacy to ensure Local Governments are supported to build safer and more resilient communities.

### **Emergency Management Forum**

On 26 May, WALGA delivered its Emergency Management Forum, which brought together more than 150 Local Government leaders, emergency management experts and practitioners from across Western Australia. Held under the theme 'One State, Many Realities', the Forum provided an opportunity for the sector to come together to share insights, discuss challenges and consider future directions. Discussions highlighted the growing complexity of disasters, the need to strengthen system capacity, and the importance of community-led resilience. Emerging tools and approaches were also explored to support better outcomes for Local Governments and their communities.

The strong attendance and engagement reflects the sector's ongoing commitment to improving emergency management capability across the State. I would like to thank all speakers, attendees and exhibitors for their valuable contribution to the success of the event. WALGA will continue to support Local Governments in building safer and more resilient communities across Western Australia.

### **Fuel Security**

WALGA continues to be actively engaged in the State's coordinated response to fuel supply issues. WALGA has been meeting regularly with Mr Rob Cossart, the Fuel Security State Controller, as well holding CEO roundtables to provide the opportunity for information sharing and practical feedback regarding fuel availability and impacts. Through ALGA I have also participated in roundtable discussions with the Hon Kirsty McBain MP Minister for Emergency Management, Regional Development, Local Government and Territories regarding impacts on the sector. These discussions and WALGA advocacy has been informed by data provided by the sector on its fuel usage and criticality of fuel dependent activities.

On 1 May, WALGA hosted a webinar on the Road Transport Contractual Chain Order (RTCCO) to over 200 viewers. The presentation provided information to Local Governments on the impact of the RTCCO and guidance on how they can respond.

The Fair Work Commission held a one-month review of the Order at the end of May. WALGA provided Western Australian insights which were included in ALGA's submission highlighting the significant uncertainty and implementation challenges facing Local Government.

WALGA will continue to provide updates to the sector as the situation evolves.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Irwin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Mark Irwin**  
**WALGA President**

## President's Contacts

The President's contacts since 7 May 2026 and scheduled before 1 July 2026 are as follows:

### State and Commonwealth Government Relations

- Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Emergency Management; Minister for Regional Development; Local Government and Territories of Australia
- Hon Melissa Price MP, Member for Durack
- Mr Jamie Chaffey MP, Shadow Assistant Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
- Hon Roger Cook MLA, Premier; Minister for State Development; Trade and Investment; Economic Diversification
- Hon Rita Saffioti MLA, Deputy Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Transport; Sport and Recreation
- Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne
- Hon Paul Papalia MLA, Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services; Defence Industries; Veterans; Racing and Gaming
- Hon John Carey MLA, Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works; Health Infrastructure X2
- Hon Simone McGurk MLA, Minister for Creative Industries; Heritage; Industrial Relations; Aged Care and Seniors; Women
- Hon Don Punch MLA, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Water; Climate Resilience; South West
- Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Regional Development; Ports; Science and Innovation; Medical Research; Kimberley
- Hon Jessica Stojkovski MLA, Minister for Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport; Peel
- Mr Shane Love MLA, Leader of the Nationals WA; Shadow Minister for Regional Development; Mines and Petroleum; Electoral Affairs
- Mr Tom French MP, Member for Moore
- Department of Housing and Works
  - Director General, Leon Mclvor

### Local Government Relations

- **State Council Meetings**
  - Zone Chair Induction
  - Finance and Services Committee Budget Workshop
  - Information Forum
  - CEO Performance Review
  - Local Government House Trust Board of Management
  - Finance and Services Committee Meeting
- **ALGA**
  - Roundtable with Minister McBain
  - Board Meeting, 21 May
  - Board NGA Briefing
  - Australian Council of Local Governments
  - National General Assembly 23-25 June
  - National General Assembly Gala Dinner

- **LGIS**
  - Board Meeting, 29 May
- City of Bayswater, Mayor Filomena Piffareti & CEO Jeremy Edwards
- Shire of West Arthur
- Shire of Woodanilling
- Reconciliation WA
- Municipal Waste Advisory Committee June Meeting
- City of Fremantle, Mayor Ben Lawver and CEO Glen Dougall

### **Conferences, Workshops, Public Relations**

- Labor Leaders Forum Lunch with Minister Swinbourn
- WALGA Emergency Management Forum
- Reconciliation WA, National Reconciliation Week Breakfast
- Trails WA App Launch
- Leadership Matters Breakfast with Basil Zempilas
- Lord Mayors Distress Relief Fund Board Meeting
- WALGA Local Government Awards
- UDIA WA Industry Breakfast with the Deputy Premier
- WALGA National General Assembly Delegate Sundowner

### **Zone Meetings**

- North Metropolitan Zone
- Pilbara Country Zone
- Goldfields Esperance Country Zone
- Great Southern Country Zone