

Pilbara Country Zone Minutes

20 August 2025

**Held at WALGA
Conference Room, Level 3,
170 Railway Parade, West Leederville**

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PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Minutes of previous meeting
2. President's Report
3. Telstra Briefing Note

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

Chair, Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks opened the meeting at 11:30am.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council
City of Karratha	Mayor Daniel Scott Cr Brenton Johannsen (<i>Online</i>)
Town of Port Hedland	Cr Ash Christensen (<i>Online</i>)
Shire of East Pilbara	President Anthony Middleton Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks – Chair Mr Steven Harding, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate
Shire of Ashburton	President Audra Smith Cr Alana Sullivan Mr Darren Kennedy, Director Corporate Services (Observer) (<i>Online</i>) Dr Garry Hunt PSM, Chief Executive Officer (Temporary) non-voting delegate
WALGA Secretariat	President Cr Karen Chappel, President Cr Paul Kelly, Deputy President Ms Chantelle O'Brien, Zone Executive Officer

1.3 APOLOGIES

City of Karratha	Ms Virginia Miltrup, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate
Town of Port Hedland	Mayor Peter Carter Mr Mark Dacombe, Chief Executive Officer (Temporary) non-voting delegate
WALGA	Mr Nick Sloan, Chief Executive Officer

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4 DEPUTATIONS

***Note:** Sharon Robins Acting Executive Director from the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation was scheduled to provide a presentation to the Zone on State Agreements. However, Sharon has since requested to postpone the presentation to a future meeting.*

4.1 CEO ROUNDUP

The CEOs of the Pilbara Country Zone provided an update on current projects and challenges for each Local Government.

Shire of Ashburton, Gary Hunt

Gary is finishing up at the Shire of Ashburton and commencing with the City of Busselton. Gary encouraged the Zone's contributions. He noted that he appreciated everyone's involvement and praises the challenges that isolated communities face.

Shire of East Pilbara, Steven Harding

- Budget passed, working through projects.
- Emergency funding challenges – waiting for funds to come through.
- Ashburton have a letter currently being drafted to invite Local, Federal, State and WALGA to attend a roundtable session.
- Aged Care Providers
- Industrial Land
- Exploring a Pilbara collaborative approach to meeting with the Regional Minister. Pilbara CEO's, Mayors and Presidents to be invited and the main advocacy discussion being for Land in each Local Government.

City of Karratha, Dan Scott (on behalf of the CEO)

- Development application approved for Karratha Homemaker Centre.
- Funding for a number of rental dwellings approved for Karratha.
- 10 yr Community Infrastructure Plan ready for Council adoption.
- Industrial Land applications.

Town of Port Hedland, Ash Christensen (on behalf of the CEO)

- EPA approval for HBI Plant.
- Housing Projects beginning to commence in South Hedland.
- Receiving Grants for projects.
- Staff retention issues.
- Budget to be endorsed by Council.

5 AGENCY REPORTS

5.1 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY UPDATE REPORT

The August 2025 report from the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety was provided prior to the meeting.

Noted

5.2 TELSTRA UPDATE

Mr Brown Boyd, Telstra Regional General Manager, provided a Briefing Note to the Zone for noting. The note was attached with the Agenda.

Noted

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Audra Smith
Seconded: President Anthony Middleton

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Pilbara Country Zone held on 19 June 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

7 BUSINESS ARISING

7.1 STATUS REPORT

The Status Report for August 2025 is below, containing WALGA's responses to the resolutions of previous Pilbara Country Zone Meetings.

Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
2 July 2025 State Council Agenda Item 8.1 Suspension and Disqualification for Offences Advocacy Position	That the Pilbara Country Zone: 1. does not support the addition of part 2 to WALGA's existing advocacy position 2.5.5 at this time; and 2. supports revisiting the addition of part 2 to WALGA's existing advocacy position 2.5.5 once the regulations for the new Office of the Inspector have been put in place.	The Zone's comment is noted. WALGA is seeking to respond to the SEMZ motion in a timely fashion. It is not yet known when the Office of the Inspector will be fully operational. However, further work could be done to ensure the advocacy position considers the role of the Local Government Inspector. State Council noted the Zone's concern and has deferred the item. State Council Resolution That WALGA defers consideration of this matter for further work, including: a. defining appropriately serious offences for intervention; and b. addressing the role of the Local Government Inspector. c. evaluating whether advocacy for disqualification based on convictions under the Planning and Development Act 2005 and Building Act 2011 should be retained. RESOLUTION 037.3/2025 CARRIED	August 2025	Tony Brown Executive Director, Member Services 9213 2051 tbrown@walga.asn.au
21 August 2024 Zone Agenda Item 8.2 Request for WALGA State Council Support and Endorsement of a Local Government	That the Pilbara Country Zone: 1. Seeks WALGA State Council support in principle for the endorsement of the 'Local Government Bank of Australia' initiative which will provide an alternative model of banking across regional Australia as to provide support to the feasibility study which is to be presented	The Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport undertook an inquiry into Bank Closures in Regional Australia with the following terms of reference: 2. the branch closure process, including the reasons given for closures;	August 2025	Tony Brown Executive Director, Member Services 9213 2051

<p>Bank of Australia Banking Model</p>	<p>to the Australian Local Government Association at the National General Assembly in 2025.</p> <p>2. Supports the Shire of Ashburton in developing a detailed business paper for further consideration of the Pilbara Country Zone once available.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. the economic and welfare impacts of bank closures on customers and regional communities; 4. the effect of bank closures or the removal of face-to-face cash services on access to cash; 5. the effectiveness of government banking statistics capturing and reporting regional service levels, including the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority's authorised deposit-taking institutions points of presence data; 6. consideration of solutions; and any other related matters. <p>In May 2024, the References Committee tabled a <u>report</u> with eight recommendations. Of particular note is Recommendation 2 which states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The committee recommends that the Australian Government commission an expert panel to investigate the feasibility of establishing a publicly owned bank. In investigating this, the panel should examine options including, but not limited to a stand-alone public bank or one associated with, and using the branch network of Australia Post.</i> <p>Other key points in the recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Australian Government adopt a policy recognising access to financial services as an essential service • That the Australian Government urgently develop a mandatory Banking Code of Conduct or Customer Service Code, incorporating a robust branch closure process • That the Australian Government establish the Regional Community Banking Branch Program (RCBBP) to help underwrite the establishment of 'community bank' branches providing in-person banking services in regional, rural and remote Australia • The committee recommends that the Australian Government works closely with the banks and Australia Post, to require all major banks to have agreements with Bank@Post and to harmonise the terms of Bank@Post agreements to improve fairness and sustainability • The committee recommends that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission consider measures to protect access to personal and business banking 	<p>tbrown@w alga.asn.a u</p>
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		<p>services in regional, rural and remote locations</p> <p>The Government has not yet formally responded to the Committee Report.</p> <p>In February 2025, the Australian Government announced a moratorium on branch closures for two and a half years until 31 July 2027 and new Bank@Post agreements. The Australian Government has flagged the following ongoing actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work and consultation on longer-term options • continue to work with regulators, industry and communities to ensure our regions have access to fit-for purpose and sustainable banking services over the long term • focus on sustainable cash distribution and ensuring Australians can use cash to pay for essentials if they want or need to <p>WALGA's focus is on the issue of Bank Closures in regional WA and working with ALGA, to advocate to the Australian Government to respond to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport's report.</p>		
18 April 2024 Zone Agenda Item 8.1 State Government Owned Infrastructure	That the Pilbara Country Zone request WALGA to raise the matter of investigating infrastructure that are Local Government operated buildings with the Office of the Auditor General.	<p>WALGA has written to the Office of the Auditor General, requesting a broad performance audit of State Government public building maintenance, that expands on the 2021/22 performance audit so that the following is also assessed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State Government entity asset management practices, specifically planning for building asset maintenance, renewal, replacement and redundancy; 2. State Government entity asset management financial planning, so that sufficient funding is appropriated to facilitate asset management maintenance and building renewal or replacement; and 3. Assessment of State Government entities that do not use the Department of Finance to facilitate building maintenance services. <p>The Zone will be advised when a response is received.</p>	August 2025	Tony Brown Executive Director, Member Services 9213 2051 tbrown@walga.asn.au

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

Noted

8 ZONE BUSINESS

8.1 GROSS RENTAL VALUE RATING OF MINING TENEMENTS

By the Shire of Ashburton

BACKGROUND

The recent Supreme Court decision in the case of Shire of Mount Magnet vs Atlantic Vanadium Pty Ltd regarding the rating of Miscellaneous Licences has caused confusion regarding the current practice whereby mining camps can be rated under the Gross Rental Valuation (GRV) method based on land use.

Current Practice

Since 2011, the policy for GRV rating of mining camps (attached) has been based on land use as opposed to a specific tenement type. This approach has been widely adopted by local governments to ensure a fair and consistent rating system. The Shire of Mount Magnet has sought to rate Miscellaneous Licences more broadly and indirectly has called into question the legality of the existing rating of Mining Camps based on GRV. The majority of mining camps sit on a Miscellaneous Licence.

Issue

The Department of Local Government's potential move to exempt Miscellaneous Licences from this rating method contradicts the intent of the 2011 policy. This exemption could lead to inconsistencies and unfair advantages for certain mining operations.

Implications

1. **Policy Contradiction:** Exempting Miscellaneous Licences undermines the 2011 policy's intent, which aimed to create a uniform rating system based on land use.
2. **Local Government Impact:** Many local governments have relied on the 2011 policy to rate mining camps fairly. Changing this practice could significantly disrupt existing local government revenue and planning, let alone the additional revenue that the Shire of Mount Magnet has sought.
3. **Media Attention:** Recent media coverage has not considered the existing mining camps on Miscellaneous Licences, leading to public misunderstanding and potential backlash.

Conclusion

It is crucial to maintain the current practice of rating mining camps under the GRV method based on land use, regardless of the tenement type. This approach ensures fairness and consistency in the rating system and aligns with the intent of the 2011 policy.

Any change to legislation needs to:

1. Clarify that based on land use, that mining camps are rateable under a GRV basis; and
2. Provide a definition of “occupied” for the purposes of rating.

The broader rateability of Miscellaneous Licences should be the subject of an extensive review by the Department of Local Government.

In the case of the Shire of Ashburton, there are approximately 400 miscellaneous licences throughout the Shire that are not currently separately rated. However, preliminary investigation suggests that most of these sit on top of an existing mining tenement that is subject to UV rating. Therefore, there would be an element of double rating on land used for the same purpose – “mining”.

It is possible for Miscellaneous licences to be issued over crown land. If this is the case, a local government would not be receiving any rating revenue for this land. It is arguable that this land should be rateable to be consistent with the principles of section 6.26 in that all land within a district is rateable land.

Financial Implications (Based on 24/25 Budgets)

Pilbara Shires	Number of Camps	GRV Value	Rates Revenue
Ashburton	25	\$34,724,000	\$6,771,000
East Pilbara	29	\$47,228,000	\$6,633,000
Karratha	26	\$36,029,000	\$11,537,000
Port Hedland	19	\$18,358,000	\$2,466,000
Total	99	\$136,339,000	\$27,407,000

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Please refer to State Council agenda Item 8.2 of the September State Council meeting, where WALGA is advocating for the following:

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

In addition, WALGA has the following rating advocacy positions:

2.1.1 Rating Exemptions Review

Position Statement	A broad review be conducted into the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently
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prescribed under Section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

2.1.2 Rating Exemptions – Charitable Purposes

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Position Statement | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Amend the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> to clarify that Independent Living Units should only be exempt from rates where they qualify under the <i>Commonwealth Aged Care Act 1997</i>;2. Either:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) amend the charitable organisations section of the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> to eliminate exemptions for commercial (non-charitable) business activities of charitable organisations; orb) establish a compensatory fund for Local Governments, similar to the pensioner discount provisions, if the State Government believes charitable organisations remain exempt from payment of Local Government rates.3. Request that a broad review be conducted into the justification and fairness of all rating exemption categories currently prescribed under Section 6.26 of the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i>. |
|--------------------|--|

Background	Exemptions under this section of the Act have extended beyond the original intention and now provide rating exemptions for non-charitable purposes, which increase the rate burden to other ratepayers. There may be an argument for exemptions to be granted by State or Federal legislation. Examples include exemptions granted by the <i>Commonwealth Aged Care Act 1997</i> and group housing for the physically and intellectually disabled which is supported under a government scheme such as a Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement or Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement.
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2.1.3 Rating Exemptions – Department of Housing: Leasing to Charitable Organisations

Position Statement	That WALGA advocate to the Minister for Housing to include in the lease agreements with charitable institutions that they must pay Local Government rates on behalf of the Department of Housing recognising the services Local Government provides to its tenants.
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Background	An example of the detrimental and perhaps unintended consequences of rate exemptions for charitable purposes is the Department of Housing has historically made, and continues to make, rate payments to Local Government for public housing administered by the Department. This practice recognises that public housing tenants consume and benefit from Local Government services and facilities.
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Over recent years, the Department of Housing has undertaken an expanding program of devolving public housing to contracted management by charitable providers. In doing this, the Department has perhaps not contemplated the implications of the entitlement for charitable organisations to claim rate exemptions under section 6.26(2) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

The communities in which there is higher public housing representation, are also often the communities that can least afford to underwrite the cost the consequential rate exemption claims; contributing to a systemic and increasing divide in the level of services and facilities provided to communities with most need.

WALGA advocates for intervention to ensure that the Department of Housing includes in future new, and renewal of, contracts for management or provision of public housing include a specified contractual obligation for payment of Local Government rates regardless of the provider's charitable status.

This intervention does not create an increased cost for the provision of public housing, it only ensures that the former status quo for public housing rate payments is reinstated and then maintained, ensuring that Local Governments do not unreasonably lose the capacity to provide services and facilities to support and enable our communities that are most in need to flourish.

2.1.4 Rating Exemptions – Rate Equivalency Payments

Position Statement	Legislation should be amended so rate equivalency payments made by LandCorp and other Government Trading Entities are made to the relevant Local Governments instead of the State Government.
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Background	A particular example is the exemption granted to LandCorp by the <i>Land Authority Act 1992</i> . In 1998, the Act was amended to include provisions for LandCorp to pay the Treasurer an amount equal to that which would have otherwise been payable in Local Government rates, based on the principle of 'competitive neutrality'.
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This matter is of concern to Local Governments with significant LandCorp holdings in their district. The shortfall in rates is effectively paid by other ratepayers, which means ratepayers

have to pay increased rates because LandCorp has a presence in the district.

The current situation involving the Perth Airport demonstrates that such a system is appropriate and can work in practice. In this case, the Commonwealth Government requires the lessee to make a rate equivalency payment to the relevant Local Government and not the Commonwealth. There is no reason why a similar system cannot be adopted for State Government Trading Entities.

2.1.5 Rating Restrictions – State Agreement Acts

Position Statement	Resource projects covered by State Agreement Acts should be liable for Local Government rates.
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Background	Before the 1980s, State Government conditions of consent for major resources projects in WA included the requirement for purpose-built towns in close proximity to project sites. These conditions were detailed in State Agreement Acts, which are essentially contracts between the State Government and proponents of major resources projects that are ratified by the State Parliament.
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The requirement to provide community services and infrastructure meant State Agreement Acts typically included a Local Government rating restriction clause. Many of these towns have since been 'normalised' due to Local Governments, the State Government and utility providers assuming responsibility for services and infrastructure.

In 2011, the State Government introduced a new policy on 'the application of Gross Rental Valuation to mining, petroleum and resource interests' (the GRV mining policy). The policy would apply for a 3 year trial period from 1 July 2012. The trial period was recently extended until 30 September, pending the outcomes of a review of the policy. The primary objectives of the policy were to clarify the circumstances where Local Governments could apply GRV rating to mining land and enable the use of GRV rating on new (i.e. initiated after June 2012) mining, petroleum and resource interests. This included the application of GRV rating to new State Agreement Acts.

However, existing State Agreement Acts continue to restrict Local Government rating. Local Governments can only rate projects covered by existing Agreements in the unlikely event

of 'both parties agree[ing] to adopt the policy'^[1]. Alternatively, the State Government has also stated that 'projects that operate under existing State Agreements and currently exempt from rates may apply the policy as part of their respective Agreement Variation processes with the Department of State Development during the trial period'^[2]. Again, this statement suggests it is unlikely that the rating exemptions will be removed for existing State Agreements since variations are infrequent and there is no real requirement to remove the exemptions.

Rating exemptions on State Agreement Acts mean that Local Governments are denied an efficient source of revenue. There are also equity issues associated with the existing exemptions since they only apply to a select group of mining companies whose projects are subject to older State Agreement Acts. Removing the rates exemption clauses from the pre-July 2012 State Agreement Acts would provide a fairer outcome for all other ratepayers, including the proponents of new resources projects.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Audra Smith

Seconded: Mayor Daniel Scott

That the Pilbara Country Zone requests WALGA to approach the Department of Local Government to:

1. Reaffirm Policy: The Department of Local Government should reaffirm the 2011 policy and clarify that it applies to all tenement types, including Miscellaneous Licences.
2. Legislative Amendments: The Department of Local Government be requested to make legislative changes to Section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act*, to remove current ambiguity.
3. Stakeholder Engagement: Engage with local governments, mining companies, and other stakeholders to discuss the implications of the Supreme Court decision and ensure a collaborative approach to any policy changes; and
4. Suggest: That the Department of Local Government instruct local governments to not immediately commence Unimproved Value (UV) rating of Miscellaneous Licences until 1 to 3 above have been completed.

CARRIED

Chair, Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks thanked Darren for his work on the above report.

^[1] Barnett, C (Minister for State Development) & Castrilli J (Minister for Local Government) 2011, *Communities benefit from resources projects policy*, media release.

^[2] Ibid.

8.2 ZONE EXPERIENCE SURVEY FEEDBACK

By Chantelle O'Brien, Zones Governance Officer

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

Noted

9 WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA

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

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

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

9.1 RATING OF RENEWABLE ENERGY FACILITIES (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.1)

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA Members have expressed uncertainty in the rating of large-scale renewable energy facilities across the State which was confirmed through a resolution of the Peel Country Zone Meeting in April 2025.
- In response to the uncertainty, WALGA engaged Paxon Consulting Group to review the rating mechanisms available for Local Governments to recover costs associated with large scale renewable energy projects.
- The purpose of the review was to examine the current legislative framework, undertake a review across other Australian jurisdictions in respect to who rating for such facilities is managed, and provide recommendations for the rating of these facilities in Western Australia, including any required amendments to legislation.
- The Final Report outlined seven Key Findings which confirmed that legislative change would be required to enable Local Governments to rate renewable energy facilities with certainty.

ATTACHMENT

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

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Key Findings of the report are outlined below:

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

(in which case the amendments would need to capture whatever approval rights would sit with the Minister).

7. Finally, if different options or permutations of rating options are used for different types of renewable energy assets, this would create another layer of legislative complexity and increase the scale of changes required.

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

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

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

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

The Report recommends the following:

1. WALGA to endorse support for the adoption of the PiLoR framework approach to the rating of renewable energy facilities.
2. WALGA to make representation to both the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety and the Department of Energy and Economic Diversification on the merits of the PiLoR framework.
3. WALGA to advocate for legislation amendment to enable WA Local Government to negotiate annual contributions with renewable energy proponents in lieu of rates.
4. WALGA should advocate to State Government to ensure any funds received through a potential community benefit arrangement are clearly identified as separate from the annual rates contributions.

COMMENT

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

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

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

- any exemptions.

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

GRV Rating

For example, a new section to the effect that:

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

Differential Rating (UV)

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

Differential Rating (GRV)

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA advocate to the State Government for:

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: Mayor Daniel Scott
Seconded: President Anthony Middleton

That the Pilbara 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 RATING OF MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.2)

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

ATTACHMENT

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

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

Current advocacy position 2.1.1 relates generally to Rating Exemptions Review:

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KEY ISSUES

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

- State Government Proposal: The proposed legislative change undermines the Supreme Court's decision and WALGA's advocacy for financial sustainability and fairness in rating practices.

COMMENT

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

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

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

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

Thursday, 10 July 2025

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

Saturday, 2 August 2025

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

Sunday, 3 August 2025

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

Monday, 4 August

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Audra Smith

Seconded: President Anthony Middleton

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

CARRIED

9.3 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY SPORTING AND RECREATION FACILITIES FUND ADVOCACY POSITIONS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.3)

By Rebecca Hicks, Policy Officer Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Following a review of WALGA's Investing in Communities advocacy positions it is proposed that Advocacy Position 3.7.1 Community Infrastructure be updated, and that Advocacy Position 3.7.2 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund be retired.
- The proposed revisions intend to align the positions with current advocacy approaches and combine them into one position.
- The proposed changes were noted by the Infrastructure Policy Team and endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team in July 2025.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The replacement of Advocacy Position 3.7.1 Community Infrastructure with an updated position.

- The retirement of Advocacy Position 3.7.2 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund.

BACKGROUND

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

Advocacy Position 3.7.1 defines community infrastructure as including, but not limited to, community pools, sport and recreation facilities, community resource centres, visitor servicing centres, child health centres, community centres, parks, playgrounds, skate parks, public libraries, arts and cultural centres, and shared facilities that Local Governments operate.

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

The current CSRFF advocacy position includes a request for two million dollars per annum, quarantined for female representation. The 2025-26 State Budget included \$6 million to establish a 'Boosting Women and Girls Participation in Sport' grant program and \$23.9 million to support Local Governments and community sporting organisations to upgrade facilities for women at targeted locations.

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

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

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

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

3.7.1 Community Infrastructure

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

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

be **replaced** with:

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

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

3.7.2 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund

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

The Local Government sector advocates for the State Government to:

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

COMMENT

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

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

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

The shift from a fifty per cent to a two-thirds State funding contribution reflects a strategic alignment of community infrastructure advocacy with prevailing funding frameworks in the broader

infrastructure sector. This ensures consistency and reinforces the case for equitable investment across all infrastructure categories.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

1. Replace Advocacy Position 3.71 Community Infrastructure with the following:

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

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

2. Retire Advocacy Position 3.72 Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Mayor Daniel Scott

Seconded: President Anthony Middleton

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

CARRIED

9.4 RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH SERVICES ADVOCACY POSITION (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.4)

By Hannah Godsave, Policy Manager Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

ATTACHMENT

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

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

Be **replaced** with:

3.2.2 Rural and Remote Healthcare Services

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

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

COMMENT

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

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

The Western Australian and Australian Governments are responsible for ensuring that all West Australians have equitable access to primary healthcare services,

regardless of their location. Local Governments should not have to step in to support the provision of these services for their communities.

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Anthony Middleton

Seconded: President Audra Smith

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

CARRIED

9.5 HEALTH ADVOCACY POSITION (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.5)

By Hannah Godsave, Policy Manager Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The retirement of Advocacy Position 3.2.1 Health.

BACKGROUND

Advocacy position 3.2.1 Health, endorsed in 2005, states:

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

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

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

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

3.2.1 Local Public Health Plans

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

The State Government must ensure that:

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

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

COMMENT

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA retire Advocacy Position 3.2 Health.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Audra Smith
Seconded: Mayor Daniel Scott

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

CARRIED

9.6 ADVOCACY POSITIONS FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORT AND MICROMOBILITY (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.6)

By Negar Nili, Policy Officer Transport and Roads

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

ATTACHMENT

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

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

These challenges have been addressed in six proposed advocacy positions:

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

ADVOCACY POSITIONS

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocating that the PTA provide appropriate end of trip facilities at public transport nodes including secure parking and storage. ○ Calling on the PTA to provide for the carriage of bicycles and eRideables on all train services. ○ Call on the PTA to explore opportunities to accommodate bicycles on buses. ● Invest in data collection, management and analysis to inform investment in active transport infrastructure and programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing a comprehensive, standardised data-sharing framework and platform for active transport information. ○ Adopting video and AI-driven solutions to enhance the quality and efficiency of data collection, analysis and reporting. ○ Develop a platform dedicated for comprehensive collection and analysis of Active Transport incident data, providing insights to improve safety, infrastructure design and strategic planning. ● Require that design guidance for the public realm provides safe and attractive environment for active transport. ● Provide safety through convenient priority road and rail crossing points for pedestrians and other active transport users and appropriate amenity including quality paths, drinking water at suitable intervals, shade and seating.
Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closing network gaps - Travel to Schools - Safety

Funding	
Position Statement	<i>WALGA calls on Federal and State Governments to provide a step change in funding for Active Transport by providing consistent, long-term investment to support Local Governments in planning, delivering, and maintaining AT infrastructure, programs, and supporting initiatives.</i>
Background	Active Transport is vital to creating healthier, more connected, and sustainable communities. Despite this, funding to support AT—across infrastructure, programs, planning, and maintenance—remains limited, inconsistent, and often short-term. This restricts Local Governments' ability to deliver integrated, accessible AT options that meet community needs. Sustained and coordinated funding is essential to increase uptake, improve safety, and ensure the long-term success of active travel initiatives.

Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing to a ten-year allocated funding program to deliver the Long-Term Cycle Network, based on a co-founded model of up to one-third contribution from Local Government. • Providing non-competitive cost indexed grants based on the extent of the defined active transport network for renewal / maintenance to support appropriate levels of service and asset longevity. • Establish a new Local Destination Program to fund the development of safe and accessible routes to key community destinations, including schools, train stations, and activity centres. • Significantly increase overall investment in Active Transport to reflect its role in health, sustainability, and transport outcomes, and bring funding levels closer to international benchmarks.
Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support complementary education initiatives to raise awareness of active transport user safety and responsible road use.
Key Challenges Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety - Travel to schools

Education/Encouragement/Community Engagement	
Position Statement	<i>When coupled with investment in infrastructure, education and encouragement programs effectively support the uptake of active transport modes and a cultural shift in attitudes toward active transport. WALGA calls on key stakeholders to form a coalition to advance mode shift to active transport initiatives, support infrastructure implementation, and realise a coordinated, multi-channel approach.</i>
Background	<p>Education, encouragement, and community engagement are essential to increasing the uptake of Active Transport. Beyond infrastructure, shifting travel behaviour relies on building public understanding of the benefits, availability, and safe use of Active Transport options. Raising awareness among both the community and key stakeholders helps normalise Active Transport, promote safety, and support long-term behavioural change.</p> <p>Public education campaigns can highlight the benefits of walking, cycling, and micromobility, while also addressing knowledge gaps around safe practices and existing networks. Targeted engagement with schools, local communities, and service providers—such as transport operators and enforcement agencies—can foster a more supportive environment for AT use across all settings.</p>
Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call on the State Government to develop guidance and materials (e.g. toolkits) that support travel behaviour change and promote safe, responsible use of Active Transport and Micromobility. • Adopt a cross-government approach to deliver targeted training for relevant stakeholders on how to safely and respectfully interact with active transport users. • Support behaviour changes programs through incentives such as parking cash-out schemes, and other supportive measures. • Encourage Local Governments to provide a platform to raise public awareness of existing active transport facilities and the benefits of using them.

Key Challenges Addressed	- Education and community engagement

eRideables	
Position Statement	<i>WALGA calls on the State Government to develop and implement a comprehensive regulatory framework to address the safety, sale, and use of escooters and other eRideables in Western Australia. The State Government should consult with stakeholders, including Local Governments, to ensure that the framework is practical, enforceable, and responsive to on-the-ground challenges.</i>
Background	The use of eRideables—such as e-scooters and similar micromobility devices—is rapidly growing across Western Australia. While these devices offer affordable, low-emission transport options, the current regulatory framework has not kept pace with their adoption. Issues such as the sale of non-compliant devices, inconsistent enforcement, and public safety concerns—particularly in high pedestrian activity areas—are placing pressure on Local Governments and other stakeholders. There is a clear need for a coordinated, state-led response that balances innovation with safety, enforcement, and community wellbeing.
Priority Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing clear rules and enforcement to prevent the importation and sale of non-compliant or illegal eRideable devices. • Strengthen enforcement mechanisms and apply appropriate penalties to ensure compliance with existing laws. • Introduce and utilise equipment to verify compliance with legal performance limits. • Empower Local Governments to regulate the use of eRideables in high pedestrian activity areas, particularly on inner-city footpaths and shared spaces. • Develop a State-led eRideable Safety Action Plan in collaboration with key stakeholders. • Ensure that Local Governments are meaningfully engaged in this process, with WALGA providing formal representation. • Deliver targeted education and awareness initiatives for school-aged children and their parents to promote informed purchasing decisions, understanding of relevant rules, rider courtesy, and safe riding behaviour.

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and community engagement - Funding
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COMMENT

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

Active Transport Vision and Strategy

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

Funding

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

Active Transport Safety

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

Education, Encouragement, and Community Engagement

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

eRideables

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

Active Travel to School

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Anthony Middleton

Seconded: Mayor Daniel Scott

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

CARRIED

9.7 OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

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

President Audra Smith left the meeting at 12:33pm and did not return.

10 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

10.1 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WALGA President, President Cr Karen Chappel presented her President's Report. The report was attached within the Agenda.

Noted

10.2 STATE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO THE ZONE

WALGA State Councillor, Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks presented on the previous State Council meeting.

Noted

11 OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROADS NETWORK

Mayor Daniel Scott raised the challenging issue of the roads network within the Pilbara region.

Karen encouraged the Zone to develop a business case through the Pilbara Regional Road Group and request the local member to sponsor the business case to assist in potentially progressing it forward.

***ACTION:** Pilbara CEOs will discuss options in addition to the work already being done and extend the scope where it will be beneficial. May look to seek assistance from the Pilbara Development Commission, Pilbara Regional Road Group as well as WALGA Executive Manager Infrastructure Ian Duncan. The key objective being to develop a similar model as the Midwest and Wheatbelt in developing road network priorities models.*

12 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Pilbara Country Zone will be held on Thursday, 20 November 2025 at WALGA in the Conference Room, Level 3, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville, commencing at 11:30am.

13 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:52pm.