

East Metropolitan Zone Minutes

21 August 2025

**Hosted by the City of Belmont
Function Room, 215 Wright Street,
Cloverdale**

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PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

ATTACHMENTS

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

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

Chair, Cr George Sekulla opened the meeting at 6:34pm.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council
Town of Bassendean	Cr Kathryn Hamilton
City of Bayswater	Mayor Filomena Piffaretti (Deputy) Cr Giorgia Johnson Mr Jeremy Edwards, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate
City of Belmont	Cr George Sekulla - Chair Cr Bernard Ryan Cr Deb Session, observer Mr Wilmot Loh, A/Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate
City of Kalamunda	Mayor Margaret Thomas non-voting delegate* Mr Nathan Ritchie, A/Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate
Shire of Mundaring	President Cr Paige McNeil Mr Jason Whiteaker, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate
City of Swan	Cr Haeden Miles Mr Stephen Cain, Chief Executive Officer
WALGA Secretariat	Mr Ian Duncan, Executive Manager Infrastructure Ms Meghan Dwyer, Governance Specialist

***Note:** It was identified after the meeting that Mayor Thomas, who is not a voting delegate (or deputy delegate), participated in the voting process during the meeting.

1.3 APOLOGIES

Town of Bassendean	Cr Jennie Carter (Deputy Delegate)
City of Bayswater	Cr Josh Eveson
City of Belmont	Mr John Christie, Chief Executive Officer non-voting delegate
City of Kalamunda	Cr Brooke O'Donnell
Shire of Mundaring	Cr John Daw
City of Swan	Cr Aaron Bowman

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Cr Haeden Miles gave the Acknowledgement of Country.

We, the Zone members acknowledge the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture and community. We embrace the vast Aboriginal cultural diversity throughout Western Australia, including Boorloo (Perth), on the land of the Whadjuk Noongar People, where this meeting is being held and we acknowledge and pay respect to Elders past and present.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4 DEPUTATIONS

Nil.

5 AGENCY REPORTS

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

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

Noted

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Paige McNeil

Seconded: Cr Georgia Johnson

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

CARRIED 9/0

7 BUSINESS ARISING

7.1 STATUS REPORT

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

Noted

8 ZONE BUSINESS

8.1 ADVOCACY FOR IMPROVED ACTION AND COMMUNICATION FROM STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

By City of Belmont

BACKGROUND

Short-term rental accommodation (STRA) refers to the use of dwellings for short-stay purposes (i.e. stays of less than 90 consecutive days), typically for tourism or temporary accommodation. STRA may be hosted (where the owner or manager resides on-site) or unhosted (where the entire property is let out in the owner's absence).

The rise of online booking platforms such as Airbnb and Stayz has significantly increased the scale and commercialisation of STRA, leading to STRA occurring in standard residential dwellings across established suburbs. This trend is placing growing pressure on housing supply, residential amenity, and the capacity of local government.

All STRA properties are now required to register with DMIRS under the Short-Term Rental Accommodation Act 2024, which forms part of the State Government's STRA regulatory framework.

As of late 2024, under the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015, unhosted STRA is exempt from requiring development approval if it operates for no more than 90 nights per calendar year. Hosted STRA, is permanently exempt from development approval, regardless of how many nights it is used. These exemptions apply to the metro area, and override any local planning framework.

Recent data from the DMIRS STRA register shows 5,212 properties in the Perth metropolitan area are currently registered for STRA, including over 150 properties in the City of Belmont alone. While this may appear modest as a percentage of total housing stock, it must be viewed in the context of the State's housing crisis, particularly record-low rental vacancy rates, increasing demand for long-term housing, and strong forecast population growth. Each exempt STRA listing removes a dwelling from the long-term rental market and does so without any requirement to demonstrate need, planning merit, or compliance with local context.

Some property owners are now issuing fixed-term leases of nine months, enabling them to operate the property for STRA in the remaining three months of the year without development approval. This practice is a direct consequence of the exemption and contributes to poor housing outcomes, particularly during a period of significant rental stress.

Importantly, properties operating under the exemption are not subject to any of the usual management requirements or conditions that would normally apply through a development approval process. This includes matters such as parking, noise, guest limits, or complaints procedures. Local governments have no ability to impose or enforce such controls.

The exemption also allows STRA to occur on properties where development approval has previously been refused. This undermines local government decision-making, erodes community confidence in the planning system, and creates confusion among residents who reasonably assume that a refusal means the use will not proceed.

The City of Belmont has taken a proactive approach to STRA regulation by adopting a local planning policy in 2024. The policy was developed in response to rising community concern and a lack of State-level controls. A recent decision to refuse a STRA use under the provisions of the policy has recently been upheld by the State Administrative Tribunal, confirming the policy's validity and robustness. However, the ongoing operation of the 90-day exemption undermines this framework, limits the City's ability to enforce compliance, and compromises the integrity of its planning system.

At present, the onus to enforce the exemption threshold lies almost entirely with local governments. The DMIRS STRA Register does not verify planning approval prior to registration, and properties exceeding the 90-day exemption cap are not automatically removed from the register or stopped from taking further bookings. This places a disproportionate monitoring and enforcement burden on local governments, who receive no additional resources or support to manage this workload.

In addition, there is growing evidence that many operators are claiming to be 'hosted' STRA to access permanent exemptions, despite not meeting the necessary criteria. The

registration system places limited responsibility on operators to verify or demonstrate their eligibility.

A review of the first year of the STRA framework is now warranted to assess its housing impacts, its administrative implications for local governments, and whether the current exemption settings remain appropriate.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

WALGA was actively involved in reforms related to STRA in Western Australia and strongly advocated for a state-wide registration system and changes to planning rules to better manage the impact of STRA on local communities.

WALGA has always held concerns about the 90-day planning exemption for un-hosted STRA but worked with the Government in a constructive manner in the design of the scheme, the planning response, and the eventual implementation of these scheme.

The Government previously stated that the STRA Register was implemented to gather information on the STRA sector in WA, and that this information is needed to ensure that we have a clear, information-based picture of the sector to enable data driven decision-making. Providing the Government with more information on the STRA sector will allow for more informed policy and regulatory responses to be made.

The STRA Register has now been in place for around 18 months, and mandatory for approximately 8 months.

WALGA has been engaging with Local Government through the implementation, to understand the challenges they are facing. The comments and concerns raised by the East Metropolitan Zone have added to this understanding.

A review of the current STRA framework is warranted to assess its housing impacts, its administrative implications for Local Governments, and whether the current exemption settings remain appropriate. WALGA recently raised these concerns directly with the newly appointed Minister for Commerce, Hon. Tony Buti MLA.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Paige McNeil

Seconded: Cr Haeden Miles

That the East Metropolitan Zone requests that WALGA prioritise their advocacy to the State Government for the following:

- 1. A joint review by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) into the first year of operation of the Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) regulatory framework, including:**
 - a. The number of properties operating under the 90-day exemption for hosted and unhosted STRA under the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015;**
 - b. The impact of exempt STRA on long-term rental housing supply, particularly in the context of the current housing availability crisis;**

- c. The compliance and enforcement burden placed on local governments due to the exemption, including the resourcing and the absence of management controls for exempt STRA; and
- d. The limitations of the current DMIRS registration system under the Short-Term Rental Accommodation Act 2024, with particular regard to:
 - i. The reactive nature of the system, which relies on local governments to identify and prove breaches and issue formal notices, rather than preventing non-compliant listings through automated or upfront checks.
 - ii. The absence of upfront checks for development approval on registration;
 - iii. The ability for operators to continue accepting bookings beyond the exemption period, even when no development approval has been obtained; and
 - iv. The misuse of the “hosted” STRA exemption category.
- 2. Advocate for reforms to the STRA framework to:
 - a. Place greater onus on operators to demonstrate valid development approval (or valid exemption) at the point of registration, including automated cross-checking where possible;
 - b. Automatically suspend properties from the register when the exemption threshold is exceeded, unless evidence of development approval is provided;
 - c. Strengthen verification of hosted STRA to ensure bona fide use.
 - d. Shift the registration system from a reactive model to a preventative one, by requiring system-led validation steps and reducing the burden on local governments to initiate compliance actions.
- 3. Advocate for removal or reduction of the 90-day exemption under the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 to reduce the compliance burden on local governments and to support long-term housing supply.

CARRIED 9/0

8.2 ADVOCACY FOR FOUR YEAR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION CYCLE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By City of Bayswater

BACKGROUND

Western Australia (WA) is currently the only jurisdiction in Australia that conducts local government elections on a biennial basis, with half of the council elected every two years. All other States and New Zealand conduct elections every four years for the entire council.

The current biennial system contributes to:

- Escalating election costs, with many local governments forecasting a near tripling of costs between 2015 and 2027;
- Voter fatigue, due to frequent elections, leading to reduced engagement and declining voter turnout;
- Less efficient governance, including more frequent councillor inductions and reduced opportunity for cohesive, long-term strategic planning.

A four-year cycle would:

- Align WA with national and international practice;
- Reduce electoral costs by half;

- Provide greater stability and enable more effective councillor induction and strategic delivery;
- Ensure accountability remains intact, as full council turnovers are rare and typically reflect a necessary democratic reset due to community dissatisfaction.

This motion recognises that reform must include mechanisms to manage the transition and address any concerns of regional and remote councils. It does not support compulsory voting, as this is unlikely to be supported across the sector and may not improve democratic engagement.

DISCUSSION

Western Australia's Biennial Cycle vs Other Jurisdictions

WA currently holds local government elections every two years, with half of council seats contested at each election. Each councillor serves a four-year term, but elections are staggered biennially for continuity. This system is unique in Australia – WA is the only jurisdiction with council elections every two years, whereas all other Australian states (and most comparable democracies) hold full council elections every four years. For example, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and the Northern Territory all run quadrennial local elections for the entire council. New Zealand historically has triennial (three-year) local elections, but even there a push is underway to extend to four-year terms to align with international norms. The original rationale for WA's staggered, two-year cycle was to ensure continuity – avoiding complete turnover of councils in a single election – and to give voters more frequent opportunities to hold local officials accountable. However, over time significant downsides of the biennial cycle have become apparent, leading to growing calls for reform.

Emerging Concerns: Voter Fatigue and Low Turnout

WA's Local Government Minister Hon. Hannah Beazley recently highlighted “voter fatigue” as a key concern in the current system. Turnout in WA local elections has stagnated at roughly one-third of eligible voters for the past decade – a disappointing level of civic participation. In 2025 the issue is especially pronounced: WA voters have already been to the polls in 2025 for a State election (March) and a Federal election (May), and the October 2025 council elections will be the third election in the same year, potentially testing the patience of electors. This stacked electoral calendar contributes to fatigue and apathy. Many residents simply tune out, as evidenced by turnout consistently hovering around 30% in recent local polls. By contrast, other states that hold local elections less frequently (and some with compulsory voting) often see higher participation each time. For instance, South Australia's voluntary local elections (every 4 years) saw 29.6% turnout in metro areas in 2022, but regional areas achieved 43%. Tasmania, after introducing compulsory voting in 2022, recorded a dramatic jump to 84.8% turnout statewide – although compulsory voting is not being advocated in this report (discussed later), this illustrates the headroom for improving engagement.

The key point is that when elections are less frequent (and framed as more significant events), voters may assign them greater importance rather than feeling perpetually “on call” to vote.

Minister Beazley has opened discussions on overhauling the cycle to once every four years for local councils, specifically to combat voter fatigue and stagnating turnout. The goal is that a longer interval between elections will “drive up local democratic participation” – each election would stand out more, and the electorate would not be worn

down by constant voting requests. WALGA (WA Local Government Association) and many council leaders are receptive to this idea, noting that WA's current two-year cycle "has been argued to contribute to voter fatigue which leads to fewer people voting". Indeed, the WA Department of Local Government's review found that frequent elections correlate with waning participation. Reducing election frequency could reinvigorate local democracy by making each voting opportunity more meaningful to residents.

Cost Implications: Doubling Frequency, Soaring Expenses

One of the most tangible motivations for moving to a four-year election cycle is cost savings. Holding elections every two years means local governments are paying for twice as many elections over a given period, compared to a four-year cycle. All the logistical expenses – hiring returning officers and polling staff, printing and mailing ballot packages, vote counting, advertising, etc. – are incurred biennially under the status quo. Over time, these costs have escalated significantly.

City of Bayswater costs associated with an election have risen from \$106,099 in 2013 to \$246,276 in 2023 (10 year 132.1% increase), with an estimated cost of \$267,000 for 2025 (12 year 151.6% increase).

Importantly, running elections half as often would roughly halve these expenditures over time, freeing up substantial funds for other community services and projects. Every dollar spent on administering an extra election is a dollar not available for road upgrades, libraries, parks, or community programs. Especially for smaller regional shires with tight budgets, the election bill is a significant burden that recurs too often. The WA Local Government Act Review Panel noted that the "current two-year cycle creates additional costs for every local government", and this was a key driver behind its recommendation to shift to four-yearly elections. By aligning with the four-year cycle standard, WA councils can reduce election-related costs by about 50% in the long run. Those savings could be re-invested into local infrastructure or rate relief, directly benefiting residents. In summary, the financial case for change is strong: a four-year cycle is markedly more cost-effective than the status quo, particularly as election costs continue to rise.

Governance and Stability: Continuity vs. Strategic Direction

A major argument historically used to defend WA's staggered biennial elections is the idea of continuity – that never replacing more than half the councillors at one time provides stability and preserves institutional knowledge. It is true that full council turnover in a single election could, in theory, disrupt ongoing projects or deprive a council of experienced members. However, in practice such complete clean sweeps are rare under any system, and the continuity concern can be overstated.

A WALGA review of this issue concluded: "The argument that a 4-yearly election cycle could potentially cause too much upheaval at the elected member level doesn't hold any weight. Local Government in WA is the only tier of government that retains the 50% rotation approach, and this is overly conservative." In other words, WA's peers have managed four-year full council elections without suffering governance breakdowns. Councils generally retain a mix of experienced and new councillors after elections – even when all seats are up for contest, incumbents often win some of the seats, ensuring some continuity. And if voters do choose to eject an entire council, it is usually a response to serious community dissatisfaction or governance failure that arguably warrants a clean slate. In these cases, a full refresh can be a positive reset for a troubled council, rather than a risk to be avoided. Moreover, the staggered system only partially mitigates turnover risk while introducing other challenges. Each WA councillor already serves a four-year term; the staggering just

means the council's composition shifts gradually. If a given councillor turns out to be ineffective or unpopular, they remain in office for up to four years regardless (unless they happen to be up for re-election at the two-year midpoint). With a four-year cycle, the individual term length remains four years – so accountability of each councillor to their electorate is unchanged – but the council as a whole faces the voters together. This collective accountability can actually enhance good governance: councillors know the entire leadership could be voted out at once if they underperform over the term, which creates a strong incentive to work collaboratively and deliver results for the community. Under the staggered system, there is less immediate pressure on a council majority, since only half face election at a time. A unified election could heighten the sense of accountability and focus councils on coherent, long-term outcomes for their constituents.

Another benefit of moving to aligned four-year terms is the streamlining of council planning and induction processes. Currently, WA councils can experience a “revolving door” effect: every two years, a batch of new councillors must be onboarded and trained while the remaining councillors continue business-as-usual. This frequent induction cycle can be inefficient and disruptive. Training resources must be expended more often, and new members arriving mid-stream may take time to get up to speed with ongoing initiatives and budgets. By contrast, in other states where the entire council is elected at once, induction and orientation can be done cohesively for the whole group. All councillors – new and returning – start the term together with the same briefings on their responsibilities, codes of conduct, current projects, and strategic plans. This unified induction fosters teamwork and a shared understanding of council priorities from day one. It also allows administration (the CEO and staff) to prepare a comprehensive onboarding program every four years, rather than running mini-inductions every election cycle. The result can be a more effective and collaborative council, as all members are on the same page about governance expectations and community goals early in the term.

Additionally, a four-year election rhythm aligns better with long-term strategic planning and project delivery. Many council initiatives – infrastructure projects, town planning schemes, economic development strategies, etc. – span multiple years. With the current staggered setup, the political makeup of the council can shift midway, potentially altering priorities or requiring re-litigation of decisions. In a four-year cycle, the council has a stable mandate period to implement its strategic community plan and budget commitments without interruption. As Local Government New Zealand notes, longer terms “provide more time to get things done” and allow elected bodies to be “more efficient and productive within [an] expanded window of time.”

Councils can undertake ambitious reforms or projects knowing that the governing body will likely remain intact to see them through (barring extraordinary circumstances). This doesn't eliminate democratic accountability – it simply concentrates it at the election when the public can judge the entire council's performance holistically. If anything, strategic continuity is enhanced: major policies won't swing back and forth with every 24-month election because the horizon is a full four-year program approved by voters.

Potential Drawbacks and Counterarguments

It is important to acknowledge and address the counterarguments and challenges that come with moving to a four-yearly election cycle. All sides of the argument must be considered to ensure that any change is carefully managed for both metropolitan and regional councils. Key concerns include:

- **Risk of Entire Council Turnover:** There is a perceived concern that having all councillors up for election at once could result in an inexperienced council if a majority of incumbents are voted out. As discussed, complete turnover is uncommon and usually occurs only when voters strongly desire change. Nonetheless, it is possible that a wave election could bring in many first-time councillors simultaneously. This learning curve challenge can be mitigated by robust induction programs (which, as noted, are easier to conduct for a whole group) and mentoring. Many councils already have training and support networks for new members; these can be bolstered if a full cohort of new councillors is elected. Furthermore, the presence of returning incumbents (likely in most cases) will provide continuity. Overall, the evidence from other states is reassuring: their councils have not collapsed due to inexperience after all-in, four-year elections. As WALGA's review bluntly stated, WA's 50% rotation model is "overly conservative" in this regard. The benefits of fresh ideas and clear mandates can outweigh the manageable risk of losing institutional memory. In cases of extreme turnover, WALGA and the Department could step in with additional governance support or even interim administrators (as happens when a council is dismissed for other reasons).
- **Loss of Mid-Term Voter Correction:** Under the current system, voters have an opportunity every two years to change the council's course by replacing some councillors. A concern is that if elections are only every four years, a community unhappy with council decisions must wait longer to express this at the ballot box. This is a valid point – the staggered elections can act as a mid-term "feedback mechanism."

However, it's worth noting that each councillor's accountability remains on a roughly four-year cycle either way; the difference is whether that cycle is offset for half the council. If a council is truly underperforming or unpopular, the four-year system allows voters to replace all councillors at the election, rather than just half. In effect, the correction, when it comes, can be more comprehensive. Additionally, if serious issues arise, there are remedies between elections (such as councillor resignations, recalls in extreme cases, or departmental interventions). On balance, the democratic principle that the people get to decide the council's fate remains – and indeed is heightened when the entire governing body faces judgment together. The responsiveness of councillors to public concerns may actually increase over the full term, since they cannot coast through a mid-term election where only some seats change. They know that in four years the community can replace the entire team if it's not meeting expectations.

- **Transitional Implementation Challenges:** Moving from the current cycle to a new one will require transitional arrangements in legislation. This is a one-time process that must be managed fairly. For instance, if the next ordinary elections are slated for 2025 under the existing schedule, how do we get to a four-year cycle?

Options include: extending or shortening certain councillors' terms to achieve a sync. One scenario could be to hold the 2025 elections as planned but for two-year terms (instead of the usual four) for those elected, so that all councils would come into alignment for a full council election in 2027. Alternatively, the 2025 elections could be deferred to 2027 for those councils (i.e. extend the 2021-elected cohort by two years) so that no election occurs in 2025 and the whole council goes up in 2027. Each approach has pros and cons – shortening terms in 2025 might disappoint

those candidates expecting four-year stints, while extending terms without election raises questions of democratic mandate.

The Local Government Act Review Panel in WA recommended a transition plan as part of moving to four-yearly elections (Recommendation 22 of the panel's report). A likely compromise could be staggering the change over the next cycle: for example, conduct the October 2025 election as usual (half council), but only for a two-year term; then in 2027, hold elections for all councillor positions statewide for standard four-year terms going forward. This would synchronize the cycle without leaving any seat unelected for more than four years. Regional councils would need clear communication about these changes to inform candidates and voters of the once-off term adjustments. While any transition will have complexities, it is a solvable administrative challenge that has been handled in other reforms. The State Government and WALGA can collaborate on a detailed transition schedule to ensure fairness and legal consistency.

- **Impact on Regional Councils:** Regional and remote local governments might face a couple of special issues. One is candidate availability. In some small shires, council seats go uncontested or there are just enough nominees to fill vacancies. Requiring all seats to be filled in one election could be daunting if community engagement is low – there's a risk of insufficient nominations, leading to extra efforts to recruit candidates or multiple supplementary elections. To manage this, a strong candidate awareness campaign should precede the first full-cycle election, encouraging locals to nominate. WALGA and regional development commissions could assist in reaching out to community leaders, women, younger residents, and other groups to step forward so that a healthy ballot is achieved in each district. Over time, the four-year rhythm might actually spark more interest in serving on council, since the elections will be higher-profile events (rather than routine biennial occurrences).

Another consideration is the learning curve if an entire small council turns over. Here, regional councils can lean on the shared services and mentoring models – for instance, neighbouring councils or experienced former councillors could provide guidance. The LGA's CEO and staff will also play a crucial role in briefing the new council on ongoing projects.

The State could consider funding extra governance training for councils that end up with an all-new slate, to ensure they gel quickly. Ultimately, regional councils can manage the change by planning ahead: encouraging staggered retirements of incumbents (so some stand again to provide continuity), promoting capacity-building programs for candidates, and scheduling thorough induction retreats right after elections. There is precedent for this kind of support; for example, when Queensland moved to whole-of-council elections decades ago, rural shires were given resources to help the new councils ramp up. In short, with proactive measures, regional local governments can navigate the shift successfully and emerge with even stronger governance practices.

Compulsory Voting – Not Recommended

In assessing low voter turnout, a frequent question is: why not make voting in local elections compulsory, as it is for State and Federal elections? After all, compulsory voting in those higher-level elections yields turnouts above 90%.

However, this proposed advocacy paper does not support compulsory voting for WA local government elections, in line with the prevailing view of WALGA delegates and many council leaders. There are several reasons why mandating the vote is not seen as beneficial or desirable in this context:

- **Values and Local Democracy Culture:** Local government in WA (and historically in SA and, until recently, Tasmania) has been based on voluntary voting – it is viewed as a civic opportunity, not an obligation. Forcing uninterested residents to vote could undermine the grassroots spirit of local elections. It might breed resentment or a tick-the-box mentality rather than genuine community engagement. The goal is to have informed, willing voters participating because they care, not simply to bump up numbers with reluctant participants.
- **Quality of Voting vs Quantity:** While compulsory voting would undoubtedly raise the turnout percentage (as seen dramatically in Tasmania's jump to 84.8% once compulsory voting was introduced), those additional voters may not be informed about local issues or candidates. Many could submit blank ballots or donkey-votes randomly, which doesn't actually improve the quality of representation. In fact, an influx of apathetic voters can distort outcomes and make it harder for committed, community-supported candidates to stand out. Higher turnout is not an end in itself if it doesn't reflect meaningful engagement. By keeping voting voluntary, we ensure that those who do vote are at least motivated to have a say; the challenge then is to motivate more people, not drag them unwillingly.
- **Enforcement and Practicality:** Enforcing compulsory voting at local level presents practical difficulties. It would require tracking down all those who didn't vote and issuing fines (as is done for state/federal). Given that in a typical WA local election roughly 60–70% of eligible electors don't vote, this could mean tens of thousands of penalty notices – a costly and unpopular exercise for local authorities or the Electoral Commission. The administrative burden could outweigh the benefits. There's also a fairness issue: many people are not engaged with council affairs; punishing them for that disengagement doesn't necessarily prompt greater engagement, it just adds a punitive element. The focus should instead be on positive engagement strategies (education campaigns, convenient voting methods like postal/online, community forums, etc.) to voluntarily increase turnout.
- **Lack of Support among Stakeholders:** It's noteworthy that even in states with historically voluntary voting, moves to make it compulsory have been met with caution. For instance, South Australia's LGA has been exploring ways to boost turnout without immediately jumping to compulsion – their recent calls were to shift election timing and consider other reforms first. WA's Local Government Act review consultations similarly did not find strong appetite for compulsory voting at this stage. WALGA's official advocacy positions have focused more on making voting easier and more accessible, rather than mandatory.

In short, there is little desire for such a change in WA's local government sector, and any attempt to impose it could face pushback from councils and communities alike.

In summary, while compulsory voting would guarantee a numerical rise in turnout, it is not recommended for WA local elections. The better path is to address the root causes of low turnout – such as voter fatigue from too-frequent elections, lack of awareness of council impact, or inconvenient voting processes – rather than to impose a legal requirement.

Engaged voters produce better local democracy than forced voters. This report therefore advises against compulsory voting and instead supports the cycle change and enhanced voluntary engagement efforts as the preferable solutions.

Managing the Transition and Next Steps

If the move to four-yearly elections is to be pursued, WALGA and member councils should formulate a clear advocacy position and transition plan to present to the State Government.

It is proposed that WALGA adopt an official policy supporting a shift to a four-year local government election cycle, for the reasons outlined above: cost efficiency, reduced voter fatigue, improved turnout, streamlined governance, and alignment with other jurisdictions' best practices. As part of this advocacy, the following considerations and steps are recommended:

- **Legislative Change:** The Local Government Act 1995 (WA) would need to be amended to change the election schedule. WALGA should lobby for an amendment that stipulates whole-council ordinary elections every four years (for example, every fourth Saturday in October, avoiding clash with State elections). The amendment should include transitional provisions specifying how and when the first full council elections occur.

WALGA can reference the Local Government Act Review Panel's Recommendation 22 which already supports four-year elections, showing that this idea has been vetted through consultative processes.

- **Transitional Arrangements:** Work with the Department Local Government on the fairest transition. As discussed, one approach is having a one-time shortened term for those elected in 2025 (2-year term to 2027), so that in 2027 all councils have elections for every seat. Alternative models (like term extensions) can be evaluated, but the key is to communicate early to both councillors and the public how the change will roll out. Regional groupings of councils (e.g. WALGA Zone meetings like this one) can be used to workshop the transition details, ensuring local factors are accounted for. The South Australian model of holding local elections one year after state elections is one idea – in WA's case, this could mean local elections in 2027 (since the State election was 2025) and every four years thereafter, which nicely staggers them midway between State election years. That timing would help alleviate combined election fatigue in the future.
- **Capacity Building for Whole-Council Elections:** WALGA should develop (in partnership with the WAEC and the Department) an induction and training framework anticipating whole-council turnovers. For instance, a "Council Boot Camp" could be offered immediately after the first four-year cycle elections, where all newly elected councillors across the state (especially from regional areas) are invited to intensive training on governance, meeting procedures, financial management, and strategic planning. This could be complemented by mentoring programs pairing new councillors with experienced ones from other councils or recently retired respected mayors. By investing in skills and knowledge transfer, we can ensure that even if a council has many new faces, they will quickly gain the competence to govern effectively.

- **Public Communication and Engagement:** When advocating for this change, it's important to also reassure the community. Some voters might ask, "Will I lose my chance to vote for my council as often?" The message should be that the value of each vote is actually enhanced – instead of voting for half the council every two years with minimal impact, voters will vote for the entire direction of council every four years.

Their vote will have a bigger influence on the outcome, and the mandate given will be clearer. Emphasize that this move is about strengthening local democracy: higher turnout is expected when elections are less frequent, and councils will be more accountable as a whole. WALGA and councils can use local media and newsletters to explain the benefits (cite the cost savings in dollar terms, remind people that all other states do this successfully, etc.). It should be framed not as taking something away, but as bringing WA up to date with a more modern, efficient system that still preserves democratic rights.

- **Online Voting and Other Reforms:** While pushing for the four-year cycle, WALGA can simultaneously advocate for continued exploration of innovations like optional online voting trials or improved postal voting processes to increase convenience.

The "Vote for Them" campaign toolkit by the Department and WALGA is a great initiative to boost turnout; such efforts should be intensified around the new election schedule to ensure that when the full council elections happen, the community is fully aware and motivated to participate. Also, WALGA might consider supporting complementary reforms such as simplified postal vote instructions (to reduce informals) and better timing of postal mailouts (avoiding holiday periods as noted).

In conclusion, the transition to a four-year election cycle for local governments in WA is both necessary and achievable. It addresses the pressing issues of escalating costs and declining voter engagement, and it aligns with the broader national standards of local governance. By adopting an advocacy position in favour of this move, the WALGA East Metropolitan Zone (and WALGA as a whole) will be taking leadership in strengthening local democracy in Western Australia.

The evidence from other states and our own analyses strongly supports the benefits of the change. With careful implementation – including a clear transition plan, support for regional councils, and continued efforts to make voting accessible (e.g. exploring online options) – the shift can be managed smoothly. The result should be more vibrant local elections every four years, higher community turnout, significant cost savings, and councils that have both the stability and accountability to make long-term positive impacts. It is a reform whose time has come, and we urge WALGA to champion it to the State Government and beyond.

ALTERNATE MOTION

Moved: Mayor Filomena Piffaretti

Seconded:

That the East Metropolitan Zone:

1. Supports the advocacy position that Local Government elections in Western Australia be held every four years, replacing the current biennial (two-year) cycle; and
2. Requests WALGA to advocate to the Minister for Local Government and the State Government for legislative reform to implement a four-year Local Government election cycle in Western Australia, bringing it into alignment with other Australian States and Territories and New Zealand.
3. Supports an Advocacy Position that compulsory voting be introduced for Local Government Elections in Western Australia.

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MOTION

Moved: Mayor Filomena Piffaretti

Seconded: Cr Haeden Miles

That the East Metropolitan Zone:

1. Supports the advocacy position that Local Government elections in Western Australia be held every four years, replacing the current biennial (two-year) cycle; and
2. Requests WALGA to advocate to the Minister for Local Government and the State Government for legislative reform to implement a four-year Local Government election cycle in Western Australia, bringing it into alignment with other Australian States and Territories and New Zealand.

LOST 4/5

8.3 EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

By Kathy Robertson, WALGA Manager Association and Corporate Governance

BACKGROUND

At the June East Metropolitan Zone (EMZ) meeting, the Zone requested the secretariat to:

1. *prepare a report reviewing the East Metropolitan Zone Standing Orders, outlining differences to other Metropolitan Zone Standing Orders; and*
2. *present the report to the 21 August 2025 Zone meeting for consideration.*

COMMENT

Metropolitan Zone Standing Orders

All Metropolitan Zones have Standing Orders. These were adopted at the establishment of WALGA and were all based on the same, standard set of Standing Orders. Only the EMZ and the North Metropolitan Zone (NMZ) have made changes to their Standing Orders.

The EMZ last reviewed and amended the Standing Orders in 2022. At the August 2022 meeting, the EMZ resolved to insert a new clause 33.2 (Recording of Votes) to give effect to a requirement for the number of votes for and against each motion to be counted and recorded in the Minutes. There is no equivalent clause included in any other Zone's Standing Orders.

The EMZ has also amended its Standing Orders to use the gender-neutral term 'Chair' rather than 'Chairman' as was used in the original Standing Orders.

The only other Metropolitan Zone that has amended its Standing Orders is the NMZ. Last year, the NMZ resolved to include a new clause that required the rotation of the Zone Chair position every term between each of its three Member Local Governments.

The Central, South and South East Metropolitan Zones have not made any changes to their Standing Orders since adoption.

Country Zone Standing Orders

WALGA administers eight of the 12 Country Zones. Of those Zones, only four have Standing Orders and/or a Constitution: the Central Country Zone (CCZ), Northern Country Zone (NCZ), Great Eastern Country Zone (GECZ) and South West Country Zone (SWCZ).

The CCZ and NCZ both have Standing Orders which are largely the same as the standard Metropolitan Zone Standing Orders.

The Constitutions for NCZ, GECZ and SWCZ lay out the objects, membership and financial management processes for the Zones. Most of the additional information included in these Zone Constitutions is pulled directly from the WALGA Constitution.

Next steps

There is nothing that requires a Zone to have Standing Orders.

As per clause 36 of the EMZ Standing Orders, the Orders may be altered or repealed subject to a resolution passed by a special majority (75%) of Zone Delegates present at a meeting. Copies of the proposed alterations, additions or amendments shall be forwarded to all Delegates by the Zone Executive Officer prior to the meeting.

The Zone may like to consider and identify what clauses in the Standing Orders need to be reviewed and updated to provide further guidance to the secretariat.

This matter was discussed and the following was raised for review:

- **Allowing for the appointment of an additional deputy delegate (e.g. a third deputy) would help ensure that each Local Government is consistently able to provide two voting delegates at every meeting, even in cases of unavailability**

8.4 2025 WALGA HONOURS RECIPIENTS

By Chantelle O'Brien, Zones Governance Officer

BACKGROUND

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

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

4 Honours recipients were from the East Metropolitan Zone:

Ms Samantha Durston	City of Swan	Merit Award
Cr Jennie Carter	Town of Bassendean	Merit Award
President Paige McNeil	Shire of Mundaring	Merit Award
Mr Jeff Somes	Town of Bassendean	Merit Award

Congratulations to all Honours recipients!

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

Noted

8.5 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 permeations 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: Cr Haeden Miles
Seconded: Cr Kathryn Hamilton

That the East Metropolitan Zone supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.1 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above.

CARRIED 8/1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WALGA has been advocating strongly for Local Governments to have the ability to rate these licences, however it is appropriate for State Council to endorse a formal position, aligning with existing advocacy position 2.11.

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 Paige McNeil

Seconded: Cr Kathryn Hamilton

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

CARRIED 8/1

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

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

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

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The replacement of Advocacy Position 3.71 Community Infrastructure with an updated position.

- The retirement of Advocacy Position 3.7.2 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 \$1 million per annum quarantined for female representation to at least \$2 million per annum.*

COMMENT

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

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

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

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Haeden Miles

Seconded: President Paige McNeil

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

CARRIED 9/0

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: Cr Georgia Johnson
Seconded: Cr Haeden Miles

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

CARRIED 9/0

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 Paige McNeil

Seconded: Cr Haeden Miles

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

CARRIED 9/0

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	- Speeding and inappropriate travel speed - Driver attitude towards vulnerable road users - Lack of safe crossing points and limited space
2. Amenities	Limited (no) funding for amenities
3. Network Gaps	Funding
4. Funding	Funding limits are a key challenge and focus of solutions
5. Integration in Plans and Programs	Low community uptake and behaviour change
6. Incentives and Disincentives	Car dependency and low awareness of active transport benefits
7. Public Transport Integration	Bikes not permitted on public transport during peak hours
8. Education and Community Engagement	- No dedicated lead - Fragmented efforts across multiple parties
9. E-Rideables	- Unclear regulation and enforcement
10. Travel to Schools	- 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	<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>

	<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> <i>The relationships to other strategic plans should be defined to align a whole-of-government approach.</i>
Background	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. 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.
Priority Actions	• 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: ○ 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: ○ 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	- 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	● 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	- Funding
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Active Transport Safety	
Position Statement	<i>WALGA calls on the State Government for the provision of safe, pedestrian/bicycle-priority crossing points; safer speeds on local roads and around community hubs, schools, and public transport nodes; and road diet treatments to support safer environments for all users of the road network.</i>
Background	High traffic volumes and vehicle speeds contribute significantly to unsafe conditions for people walking, cycling, and using other forms of Active Transport. Creating safer streets requires a combination of infrastructure improvements, speed management, and environmental design strategies that prioritise the most vulnerable users.
Priority Actions	• Improve safety for active transport users at existing roundabouts and intersections. • Seek reforms to Main Roads WA's speed zoning policies and processes to enhance Local Governments' influence in setting speed limits on local streets and distributor roads. • Support road design changes such as tree planting, lane narrowing, and other physical measures that promote slower, safer streets. • Reduce through-traffic volumes on all roads except Primary Distributors, especially in residential and mixed-use areas. • Target safety improvements in high-risk locations, including school precincts and public transport hubs. • Support complementary education initiatives to raise awareness of active transport user safety and responsible road use.
Key Challenges Addressed	- Safety - Travel to schools

Education/Encouragement/Community Engagement	
Position Statement	<i>When coupled with investment in infrastructure, education and encouragement programs effectively support the uptake of active transport modes and a cultural shift in attitudes toward active transport. WALGA calls on key stakeholders to form a coalition to advance mode shift to active transport initiatives, support infrastructure implementation, and realise a coordinated, multi-channel approach.</i>
Background	Education, encouragement, and community engagement are essential to increasing the uptake of Active Transport. Beyond infrastructure, shifting travel behaviour relies on building

	public understanding of the benefits, availability, and safe use of Active Transport options. Raising awareness among both the community and key stakeholders helps normalise Active Transport, promote safety, and support long-term behavioural change. Public education campaigns can highlight the benefits of walking, cycling, and micromobility, while also addressing knowledge gaps around safe practices and existing networks. Targeted engagement with schools, local communities, and service providers—such as transport operators and enforcement agencies—can foster a more supportive environment for AT use across all settings.
Priority Actions	• 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	• 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

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	• 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	- Closing Network Gaps - Travel to Schools - Education and community engagement - Funding

COMMENT

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

Active Transport Vision and Strategy

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

Funding

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

Active Transport Safety

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

Education, Encouragement, and Community Engagement

Behaviour change requires more than infrastructure. Effective education and engagement build public understanding, increase awareness, and help normalise Active Transport. A

coordinated approach involving communities and relevant stakeholders is vital for shifting attitudes and increasing uptake.

eRideables

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

Active Travel to School

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Georgia Johnson

Seconded: President Paige McNeil

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

CARRIED 9/0

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.

10 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

10.1 STATE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO THE ZONE

State Councillor, Cr Haeden Miles presented on the previous State Council meeting.

Noted

10.2 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President's Report was attached within the Agenda.

Noted

11 OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

12 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the East Metropolitan Zone will be held on Thursday, 20 November at the City of Belmont commencing at 6:30pm.

13 CLOSURE

The Chair expressed appreciation to all members for their commitment to the Zone and their contributions to debate and discussion. Special thanks were extended to the State Councillors representing the Zone, and to Cr Georgia Johnson for Chairing the first half of the term.

The Chair reflected on the experience of Chairing the Zone, noting it had been a rewarding role. A particular highlight mentioned was the Zone Forum held as part of the State Council meeting hosted by the City of Swan.

The Chair concluded by wishing all councillors the best of luck in the upcoming elections.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:11pm.