



GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items

Unconfirmed Minutes

Friday 21 February 2025
Zoom Videoconference, commencing at 9.00am

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GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS (GVROC)

Videconference meeting of the GVROC Council to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items held Friday 21 February 2025 at 9.00am

AGENDA

1. OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The purpose of the meeting is to provide advice to the GVROC WALGA State Council Representative, on the Agenda for the WALGA State Council Meeting to be held on 5 March 2025.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Code of Conduct, Councillors and CEOs must declare to the Chairman any potential conflict of interest they may have in a matter before the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils as soon as they become aware of it. Councillors, CEOs and Deputies may be directly or indirectly associated with some recommendations of the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils. If you are affected by these recommendations, please excuse yourself from the meeting and do not participate in deliberations.

3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Attendance

Cr Mal Cullen	President, Shire of Coolgardie (Chair)
Cr Tracey Rathbone	Councillor, Shire of Coolgardie
Mr Aaron Cook	A/CEO, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr Glenn Wilson	Mayor, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Mr Andrew Brien	CEO, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
Cr Laurene Bonza	President, Shire of Dundas
Mr Peter Fitchat	CEO, Shire of Dundas
Cr Ron Chambers	President Shire of Esperance
Mr Matthew Walker	A/CEO, Shire of Esperance
Cr Patrick Hill	President, Shire of Laverton
Mr Phil Marshall	CEO, Shire of Laverton
Mr Ty Matson	CEO, Shire of Leonora
Ms Kristy Van Kuyl	Shire of Menzies
Mr Andrew Mann	Executive Officer, GVROC

3.2 Apologies

Cr Wayne Johnson	Councillor, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
Cr Sharon Warner	Councillor, Shire of Dundas
Cr Wes Graham	Councillor, Shire of Esperance
Mr Shane Burge	CEO, Shire of Esperance
Cr Shaneane Weldon	Councillor, Shire of Laverton
Cr Peter Craig	President, Shire of Leonora
Cr Paul Warner	President, Shire of Menzies
Cr Sudhir Sudhir	Councillor, Shire of Menzies
Mr Peter Bentley	A/CEO, Shire of Menzies
Cr Peter Grundy	President, Shire of Wiluna
Mr Matt Macintyre	CEO, Shire of Wiluna
Mr David Mosel	CEO, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
Cr Damian McLean	President, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku

3.3 Guests

Nil

3.4 WALGA Representatives

Rachel Armstrong Policy Manager Emergency Management
Coralie Claudio Senior Policy Advisor, Planning

3.5 DLGSC Representatives

Nil

5. DLGSC REPORT

From: Department Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC)

Attachment: DLGSC report – February 2025 – WALGA Zone meetings

Background:

DLGSC has advised it is still finalising its February 2025 report for consideration at all WALGA Zone meetings and that it will distributed once completed.

Comment:

DLGSC have requested that if WALGA zones have any questions on the report once provided, WALGA will note these at the meetings and send them to the DLGSC for a response. The DLGSC will then provide answers to these questions and circulate them back to WALGA for advice back to the WALGA zones. For individual queries from zone members, a list of DLGSC contacts is contained in the report.

The GVROC notes the DLGSC report February 2025 will be provided to members once completed and received by the GVROC Executive Officer.

6. EMERGING ITEMS

From: Chair GVROC

Background:

WALGA State Council meets five times each year and as part of the consultation process with Member Councils circulates the State Council Agenda for input through the Zone structure. The Zone can provide comment or submit an alternate recommendation that is then presented to the State Council for consideration.

A full copy of the State Council Agenda for the meeting on 5 March 2025 can be found at **Attachment 3**.

Notification of emerging items must be provided to the Chair no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

7. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Decision

7.1 Climate Change Advocacy Position

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council replace the 2018 Climate Change Policy Statement Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change with the following advocacy position:

Climate Change significantly impacts Local Governments' operations and responsibilities, as well as their communities.

Local Government is committed to taking climate action, including by:

- ***reducing operational emissions in line with Australian and Western Australian Government 2050 net zero targets***
- ***providing leadership and support to their communities to reduce carbon emissions***
- ***embedding climate risk management into their operations to enhance adaptation and build community resilience to the impacts of climate change***
- ***working with other levels of Government and key stakeholders to ensure policy and on-ground programs are effective, equitable and targeted.***

WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination, and action to:

1. ***Ensure Australia and Western Australia meet net zero emissions targets through:***
 - a. ***enacting legislation which sets clear, measurable targets for emission reduction***
 - b. ***developing and funding coordinated emissions reduction policies, guidance and programs***
 - c. ***acknowledging the role of Local Government as an implementation partner in emissions reduction policy and planning.***
2. ***Empower Local Government to accelerate adaptation and build resilience in their communities through:***
 - a. ***ensuring the roles and responsibilities set out under the Council of Australian Governments Roles and Responsibilities for Climate Change Adaptation in Australia are implemented and adequately resourced***
 - b. ***providing up to date, consistent and accessible data to enable evidence-based decision making and investment***
 - c. ***developing national guidance on adaptation responses to facilitate coordinated and equitable planning and implementation.***
3. ***Provide funding and resources and support to Local Government to enable on-ground implementation, including for:***
 - a. ***the implementation of the Regional Climate Alliance Program across Western Australia***
 - b. ***the establishment and maintenance of corporate emission inventories and action plans***
 - c. ***providing transformational investment to facilitate emission reduction activities***
 - d. ***undertaking climate risk assessments and the development of adaptation action plans***
 - e. ***a dedicated adaptation fund to address localised climate risks and build climate resilience.***

IN BRIEF:

- WALGA's current climate change [Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#) were endorsed by State Council in 2018.
- There have been significant legislative and policy changes at both the Australian and State Government level since that time. The impacts of climate change are also being increasingly felt across Western Australia, putting Local Government in a challenging position with limited resources and support to mitigate emissions and adapt.

- Feedback from the sector through climate surveys, undertaken every two years, and targeted consultation confirms that significant resourcing and funding gaps exist for Local Government to effectively respond to climate change.
- The updated Advocacy Position focuses on the urgency and scale of climate impacts and calls for a comprehensive framework, and action, to enable Local Government to manage the impacts of climate change and build resilient communities.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed the Advocacy Position at their 11 December 2024 meeting.

ATTACHMENT

- [Climate Change Legislative and Policy Context](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The revised advocacy position is intended to be an overarching sector position on climate change. Other advocacy positions, including Urban Forest (4.5), Renewable Energy (6.16, 6.17, 6.18), Emergency Management (8.1, 8.2, 8.11) and Coastal Planning (6.8) provide a sector position on specific climate related matters.

The **existing** [Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#) is:

4.1 Climate Change

Local Government acknowledges:

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

Local Government is committed to addressing climate change. Local Government is calling for:

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

It is proposed that the current advocacy positions be **replaced** with:

Climate Change

Climate Change significantly impacts Local Governments' operations and responsibilities, as well as their communities.

Local Government is committed to taking climate action, including by:

- *reducing operational emissions in line with Australian and Western Australian Government 2050 net zero targets*
- *providing leadership and support to their communities to reduce carbon emissions*
- *embedding climate risk management into their operations to enhance adaptation and build community resilience to the impacts of climate change*
- *working with other levels of Government and key stakeholders to ensure policy and on-ground programs are effective, equitable and targeted.*

WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination, and action to:

1. *Ensure Australia and Western Australia meet net zero emissions targets through:*
 - a. *enacting legislation which sets clear, measurable targets for emission reduction*
 - b. *developing and funding coordinated emissions reduction policies, guidance and programs*
 - c. *acknowledging the role of Local Government as an implementation partner in emissions reduction policy and planning.*
2. *Empower Local Government to accelerate adaptation and build resilience in their communities through:*
 - a. *ensuring the roles and responsibilities set out under the Council of Australian Governments Roles and Responsibilities for Climate Change Adaptation in Australia are implemented and adequately resourced*
 - b. *providing up to date, consistent and accessible data to enable evidence-based decision making and investment*

- c. *developing national guidance on adaptation responses to facilitate coordinated and equitable planning and implementation.*
- 3. *Provide funding and resources and support to Local Government to enable on-ground implementation, including for:*
 - a. *the implementation of the Regional Climate Alliance Program across Western Australia*
 - b. *the establishment and maintenance of corporate emission inventories and action plans*
 - c. *providing transformational investment to facilitate emission reduction activities*
 - d. *undertaking climate risk assessments and the development of adaptation action plans*
 - e. *a dedicated adaptation fund to address localised climate risks and build climate resilience.*

BACKGROUND

There have been significant legislative and policy changes since WALGA's 2018 Climate Change Policy Statement and Advocacy Position were endorsed. The Australian Government enacted the *Climate Change Act 2022*, setting targets for greenhouse gas emissions: a 43% reduction below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050. The WA Government introduced the *Climate Bill 2023*, aiming for an 80% reduction in WA Government emissions by 2030 and a state target of net zero by 2050. The State and Australian Governments have also released a suite of policies addressing mitigation and adaptation action.

Climate science and projections are also becoming clearer about the risks posed by climate change and the need for action. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [2023 Report](#) states that climate change poses a significant threat to human well-being and planetary health, emphasising the need for urgent action to secure a sustainable future and an integrated adaptation and mitigation effort.

Local Governments and their communities are on the frontline of dealing with increasing climate risks and the associated impacts. 60 WA Local Governments are signatories to the [WALGA Climate Change Declaration](#) which represents over 87% of the State's population. Making a declaration demonstrates a Local Government's ongoing commitment to locally appropriate climate action to both mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

However, Local Government continues to face substantial challenges in addressing climate change due to limited funding and support from the Australian and State Governments. Funding and capacity constraints can make undertaking emissions reduction and adaptation actions particularly challenging for smaller regional Local Governments, whose assets and communities may be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events.

In 2021-23, WALGA was successful in securing State Government funding to deliver a [Regional Climate Alliance \(RCA\) Pilot Program](#), an initiative under the [Western Australian Climate Policy](#). Modelled on successful programs in other jurisdictions, two groups of Local Governments, the South Coast Alliance and Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils focused on accelerating climate action at the regional scale. WALGA continues to [advocate to the State Government](#) to reinstate the program and expand it statewide.

To develop the updated Advocacy Position, WALGA ran a workshop with Local Government officers to establish the parameters for the review. Climate Change survey data, collected in 2020, 2022 and 2024, also informed the development of the updated Advocacy Position. WALGA also participated in an evaluation of the RCA Pilot Program with State Government. The themes from the survey data, consultations and Pilot evaluation, were:

- in addition to signing WALGA's Climate Change Declaration, many Local Governments are embedding climate change considerations into their strategic community plans, policies and operations
- of the 139 WA Local Governments, 110 (80% of Local Governments) are taking at least one significant action relating to climate change
- the biggest barrier to accelerating action at the local level is the lack of targeted funding and support. This is particularly significant for regional Local Governments.

The draft updated Advocacy Position was provided to relevant Local Government officers for comment and their feedback was incorporated.

COMMENT

The updated Advocacy Position builds on the 2018 position, acknowledging the substantial shift in policy development and public sentiment on climate change. The updated Position therefore focuses on the practical actions that will enable a coordinated and strategic framework to reduce emissions and respond to the impacts of climate change.

Local Governments continue to demonstrate leadership in climate action by responding and managing impacts at a local scale, however, the position reflects the need for greater funding and support from the Australian and State Governments.

The updated Advocacy Position, together with climate change-related advocacy positions in the areas of emergency management, urban forests, renewable energy, coastal planning, and water resources (upcoming), will provide a sound basis for WALGA's ongoing climate change advocacy and policy development.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC note the WALGA recommendation for the State Council to replace the 2018 Climate Change Policy Statement Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change with the advocacy position as presented and provide the following alternate simplified recommendation for consideration by WALGA and State Council:

That State Council replace the 2018 Climate Change Policy Statement Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change with the following advocacy position:

WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to:

- *Prioritise and provide the necessary climate leadership, coordination, and action to deliver a climate change response that improves quality of life for all Western Australians for generations to come; and*
- *Prioritise the provision of funding and resources and support to Local Government to enable local communities to respond to the effects of climate change.*

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

7.2 Waste Management Legislation Advocacy Position

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council replace the Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.1 Waste Management Legislation with the following advocacy position:

- 1. Local Government supports Australian and State Government waste management legislation which:**
 - a. includes requirements for national and state waste strategies which support Local Governments to implement the strategies and achieve targets**
 - b. focuses on coordinated action and clear roles and responsibilities**
 - c. establishes a lead agency for waste management**
 - d. establishes and maintains a regulated product stewardship framework for all products entering the Australian market**
 - e. includes provisions to optimise market development and participation in waste processing.**
- 2. Local Government calls for the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 to be amended to include:**
 - a. Waste education in the definition of Waste Services**
 - b. Circular Economy principles.**

IN BRIEF:

- WALGA's current [Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#) were adopted in 2004.
- The Policy Statement outlines Local Government's position on waste management legislation in Western Australia and sets out the key objectives waste management legislation should achieve.
- WALGA used the Waste Management Policy Statement to inform advocacy on the development, and reviews, of the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* (WARR Act).
- The current Advocacy Position, and many of the elements in the policy statement, are no longer relevant as they have been achieved.
- The revised Advocacy Position focuses on both Australian and State Government legislation and reflects the shift in focus from traditional waste management towards a circular economy approach.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed the new Advocacy Position at its meeting on 11 December 2024.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The existing [Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#) is:

Local Government supports waste management legislation that references the principles of Sustainability and the Waste Hierarchy.

To be effective, waste management legislation should include the following primary objectives:

- 1. Protection of human health and the natural environment;*
- 2. Minimise resource consumption;*
- 3. Minimise waste; and*
- 4. Effect the transition to a waste-free society.*

It is proposed that the current advocacy positions be **replaced** with:

- 1. Local Government supports Australian and State Government Waste Management Legislation which:**
 - a. includes requirements for national and state waste strategies which support Local Governments to implement the strategies and achieve targets**
 - b. focuses on coordinated action and clear roles and responsibilities**
 - c. establishes a lead agency for waste management**
 - d. establishes and maintains a regulated product stewardship framework for all products entering the Australian market**
 - e. includes provisions to optimise market development and participation in waste processing.**
- 2. Local Government calls for the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 to be amended to include:**

- a. *Waste education in the definition of Waste Services*
- b. *Circular economy principles.*

BACKGROUND

WALGA used the Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement as a reference point in the development, and both reviews, of the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* (WARR Act). There have not been any significant changes to the WARR Act since it was enacted.

The national waste legislation, the *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020* (RaWR Act), is being reviewed currently. The development of an updated Advocacy Position will assist in providing input to the review.

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed the new Advocacy Position at their meeting on 11 December 2024.

COMMENT

Local Government feedback, through both reviews of the WARR Act and in the development of this Advocacy Position, identified key areas to include in the revised position. These areas reflect the changes in approach to waste management since 2007, when the WARR Act was introduced, including a shift of thinking in relation to waste management, particularly with the advent of circular economy principles, and the increased understanding of the importance of waste education and behaviour change.

The Advocacy Position focuses on the importance of waste strategies (at the national and state level), coordinated action, clear roles and responsibilities, a lead agency for waste management and effective product stewardship provisions. Specifically, for the WARR Act, amendments are suggested to include waste education and circular economy principles.

GVROC COMMENTS

While the GVROC notes and supports the WALGA recommendation, there is still a need for further guidance and policy from WALGA, State and Federal Governments on waste items (e.g. hazardous materials and waste) that are not covered by the current policy positions. For example, a can of bitumen tar that can be purchased by the community but is not accepted in general waste collection or via any other special collections. The policy and advocacy positions by WALGA, State and Federal Governments need to consider how all waste materials should be disposed of and the detail and methods outlined for all materials that can be purchased or accessed by the community.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC endorse the WALGA recommendation for the State Council replace the Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.1 Waste Management Legislation with the advocacy position as presented, but request that WALGA and the State Council also consider the GVROC comments as presented above to further expand the policy statement and advocacy position.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas***
 Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

Carried

7.3 Draft Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance Responsibilities: Rural Regions

WALGA Recommendation

That Goldfields Esperance Zone:

- 1. Notes Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Management Responsibilities, Rural Regions;**
- 2. Notes that Local Governments may submit written feedback directly to WALGA for consideration;**
- 3. Provides comments on Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance Responsibilities at the Zone Meeting on 21 February 2025.**

ATTACHMENT

[DRAFT] Operational Procedure 113 - Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance Responsibilities (Rural Regions) – **Attachment 4**

BACKGROUND

WALGA has received a draft copy of the MRWA *Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance Responsibilities, Rural Regions* (OP 113) (**Attachment 4**) for review and comment. The purpose of OP 113 is to provide principles and practical guidance for determining how the responsibility for maintaining the different parts of highways and main roads is to be allocated between Main Roads and Local Governments. As such, the document provides essential guidance for the limits of maintenance responsibilities for Local Governments and will be relied on to resolve disputes between the parties. It is therefore of high importance and careful scrutiny is encouraged.

OP 113 will effectively supersede the *Operational Responsibility for Public Roads in Western Australia, 2009* (OP 2009) which was the result of extensive negotiations between Main Roads WA, IPWEA and WALGA and covered both Metropolitan and Regional scenarios. This document was never formally adopted but has nevertheless guided decision making over the years.

In 2019, *Operational Procedure 112: Operational Boundaries and Asset Responsibilities, Metropolitan Region* was published by Main Roads after consultation with Metropolitan Regional Road Groups and WALGA. Operational Procedure 112 and 113 draw heavily on the content of the 2009 document and will effectively supersede it.

The document outlines the limits of responsibilities in the following situations:

- Highways in Built Up Areas
- Highways in Rural Areas
- Bridges, Pathways, and Drainage Structures
- Stormwater Infrastructure
- Lighting
- Public Transport Facilities
- Roadside Facilities
- Signs & Traffic Control Devices
- Fences
- Graffiti
- Vegetation Control in Built Up Areas
- Vegetation Control in Rural Areas.

Indicative drawings are also provided, indicating limits of responsibility.

COMMENT

The principles set out OP 2009 were broadly agreed by all parties at the time and WALGA has therefore reviewed OP 113 relative to OP 2009. Much of the text in OP 113 has been drawn directly from OP 2009 and the documents are in general alignment. However, WALGA has noted some discrepancies and concerns summarised below:

1. Introduction

Refers to additional works to be funded from the SRFLGA. Additional works are not defined, and any funding changes would be for SAC approval. WALGA recommends this principle be removed.

1.7 Maintenance Responsibility Guidelines

The draft OP 113 states that the “tangent point area” of a Local / State Road intersection will remain the responsibility of the LG. This principle was previously disputed and has not been tested. If the parties agree that Main Roads will maintain this area in accordance OP 113, then there is no necessity to include this statement.

Point (3) refers to funding for reseal works of the tangent area to be provided from the SRFLGA. Any changes to funding arrangements would be for SAC approval. For certain specified projects, funding could be allocated through Strategic Initiatives

2.1.4 & 2.2.5 Driveways

States that Main Roads is not responsible for the maintenance of private driveways. Main Roads is responsible for approvals and the private owner is responsible for maintenance. In built up areas Local Governments may be responsible to issue work permits. This clause needs to be expanded to confirm the role of Local Government.

2.5 Lighting

Add an additional section stating the costing arrangements as per OP 2009. In particular the principle that Main Roads will subsidise 50% of the installation, maintenance and operating cost when Local Governments install lighting on ordinary highways in built up areas.

2.6.2 Bus Passenger Facilities

Part (2) add “in accordance with the partnership agreement between WALGA and the PTA”

Figures 6,7,8,9,10,11,12 &13

The key to these figures states, “Main Roads Responsibility (resurfacing)”, resurfacing to be replaced with “maintenance”. According to the text and definitions, maintenance is defined as all works of any description required to keep the road serviceable, not just resurfacing.

NEXT STEPS

Zones are requested to scrutinise OP 113 and provide feedback to WALGA in the following areas.

- Does current and desirable practice correspond to the principles outlined in the OP 113?
- Are there any areas of responsibility or principles not addressed in the OP 113?
- Do any of the proposed allocations of responsibility entail substantial budgetary impacts to Local Governments?
- Any additional concerns or comments.

Discussion at the Zone meeting is encouraged. Any written feedback should be provided by Friday, 28 February, to infrastructure@walga.asn.au.

This document and draft OP 113 have also been provided to all regional CEOs and Infrastructure Directors providing opportunity for feedback directly to WALGA.

Following the February 2025 round of Zone meetings, WALGA will collate all feedback and provide a consolidated submission back to Main Roads WA.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC:

- 1. Notes the Draft Copy of the MRWA *Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Management Responsibilities, Rural Regions*;**
- 2. Notes that Local Governments may submit written feedback directly to WALGA for consideration by 28 February 2025;**
- 3. Provides the attached comments to WALGA for consideration on the Operational Procedure 113: Operational Boundaries and Asset Maintenance Responsibilities.**

RESOLUTION:

**Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*
Seconded: *Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton***

Carried

7.4 State Council Regional Meeting

WALGA Recommendation

That the GVROC as the Goldfields Esperance Zone:

- Agree in principle on a format for the September 2025 Zone Forum to be hosted by the Shire of Dundas in Norseman, and a suggested program.
- Agree on the themes of presentations and the presenters if presentations are to be conducted.
- Propose key sites if site visits are to be conducted.
- If a panel discussion or a question-and-answer session is to be conducted, the topic, participants and a facilitator should be agreed.
- Advise on a contact person for WALGA to liaise with to conduct more detailed planning and to coordinate and finalise arrangements.

BACKGROUND

At the November 2024 GVROC/Goldfields Esperance WALGA Zone meeting, the Shire of Dundas (the Shire) agreed to host the September 2025 Regional Country WALGA State Council meeting.

The Shire will provide and set up facilities and arrange catering (details as provided in the November Zone meeting Agenda).

WALGA is now starting to coordinate the travel plans and a more specific program for the visit.

COMMENT

An important part of the program for the regional visit is the Zone Forum. WALGA ask that the Zone decide on the format and content of the Zone Forum – essentially this is “theirs”.

The proposed WALGA September 2025 Zone Forum program outline is:

Thursday, 5 September	7:00am	Depart Perth
	11:30am	Arrive Norseman
	11:30am	Lunch
	12:30pm - 4:30pm	Zone Forum
	6:30pm	WALGA Dinner
Friday, 6 September	8:30am – 1:00pm	WALGA State Council Strategic Forum and State Council meeting
	1:00pm	Lunch
	2:00pm	Depart Norseman
	8:00pm	Arrive Perth

Zone Delegates and Local Government CEOs are all welcome to attend the Zone Forum and State Council business. Zone Delegates are encouraged to attend the Zone Forum.

WALGA will send invitations and information directly to each Zone Delegate and Local Government CEO.

Zone Forum

The Zone Forum provides an opportunity for the Zone to present to State Council on local achievements and challenges.

The format and content of the Zone Forum is entirely up to the Zone.

Some suggestions include:

- Local Governments can provide individual presentations on their Local Government (noting that there are 9 LGs in the Zone and so this may not be practicable).
- Subgroups could be formed to provide joint presentations on issues, priorities, themes, major projects, collaborations etc for the Zone.
- Site visits (time permitting).
- Panel discussion or question-and-answer session.

Invited guest speakers from the region e.g. State or Federal Members of Parliament, Agency representatives.

The Zone may also wish to invite additional people to attend the Zone Forum, as observers/networking opportunities. These may include:

- State or Federal Members of Parliament
- All Elected Members from the Zone Local Governments
- Senior officers from the Zone Local Governments

In considering who to invite, the capacity of the available venue should be considered.

WALGA Dinner

WALGA will host a dinner at a venue in Norseman on the evening of Thursday, 5 December. Zone Delegates and CEO's will be invited. Invitations will not be transferrable, unless to a Deputy Delegate attending in the absence of a Delegate. Other Local Government Elected Members and officers may attend. However, this will be subject to capacity and at the cost of the respective Local Government or individual.

State Council Strategic Forum and State Council Meeting

The WALGA Secretariat is responsible for the Agenda for these meetings.

The Strategic Forum may have an element of local content, depending on availability of speakers and relevant topic.

All Zone Delegates, Elected Members, Local Government CEO's and other relevant staff are invited to attend and observe these meetings.

GVROC COMMENTS

GVROC notes the request from WALGA and will liaise with the Shire of Dundas on the arrangements for the September 2025 Zone Forum.

Suggestions for presentations to include:

- General GVROC overview presentation for the region to be provided by the GVROC Chair
- Presentation of work being done by the GVROC Regional Climate Alliance
- Presentation of the work being done by the Goldfields Esperance Water Security Group
- Each LGA to consider a 5-10 minute presentation

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC:

1. **Note in principle the proposed format for the September 2025 Zone Forum to be hosted by the Shire of Dundas in Norseman, and the suggested program outline.**
2. **Consider the following themes for presentations and the presenters if presentations are to be conducted.**
3. **Request the Shire of Dundas to coordinate an appropriate site visit for attendees.**
4. **Note if a panel discussion or a question-and-answer session is to be conducted, the topic, participants and a facilitator to be decided and WALGA to be informed.**
5. **Advise WALGA that the contact person for WALGA to liaise with to conduct more detailed planning and to coordinate and finalise arrangements, will be the CEO at the Shire of Dundas, Mr Peter Fitchat.**

RESOLUTION:

**Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie
Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**

Carried

8. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Matters for Noting/Information

8.1 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on the 2025 Federal Election.

IN BRIEF

- The Federal election is due to be held on or before 17 May. Recent speculation suggests that a date in mid-April is likely.
- The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) will run a Federal Election Campaign and has prepared a campaign website and assets that Local Governments can use to promote and support the campaign issues.
- To complement ALGA's advocacy, WALGA has prepared a policy platform highlighting priority issues for WA Local Governments.
- The document will form the basis of WALGA's advocacy leading into the Federal election and has been distributed to WA Members of Parliament and candidates.

ATTACHMENT

- [WALGA 2025 Federal Election Priorities](#)

BACKGROUND

The Federal election is due to be held on or before 17 May. Recent speculation suggests that a date in mid-April is likely.

ALGA will be running a public, national election campaign on behalf of the Local Government sector, seeking funding commitments from the major parties in a number of important areas, including:

- \$1.1 billion per year for enabling infrastructure to unlock housing supply (the Coalition has essentially already agreed to this through their \$5 billion Housing Infrastructure Programme)
- \$500 million per year for community infrastructure
- \$600 million per year for safer local roads
- \$900 million per year for increased Local Government emergency management capability and capacity, and
- \$400 million per year for climate change adaptation.

The campaign will include a dedicated website, and collateral that Local Governments can promote and use in their own discussions with candidates. These will be shared with WALGA members in coming weeks.

The ALGA President wrote to the Government and the Opposition in January outlining these funding asks ahead of the election and requesting meetings with key Ministers and Shadow Ministers to discuss these policy asks in further detail. It has also provided a 202526 Budget Submission to the Commonwealth Treasury that focuses on these priority areas.

To complement ALGA's election advocacy, WALGA has also prepared a policy platform highlighting priority issues for WA Local Governments, including:

- *Community Infrastructure* – additional, ongoing formula-based funding streams for Local Governments to provide certainty and enable effective planning for community needs.
- *Coastal Management* – Develop a National Coastal Hazards Adaptation Strategy, supported by an ongoing funding program.
- *Emergency Management* – Act on the findings of the Colvin Review, Review the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and incorporate betterment, enhance training for Local Government Emergency Management practitioners.
- *Regional Health* – Address the systemic failures in regional primary healthare provision through the development of adequate and appropriate funding models.
- *Safer Roads* – Funding commitment for the Australian Government's contribution to applying proven safety countermeasures on 439 WA Local Government Roads, totalling 8,208km.
- *Telecommunications* – Introduce measures to improve the adequacy of telecommunications in regional and peri-urban areas.

WALGA has provided this document to all relevant Ministers, WA Members of Parliament and candidates and is seeking meetings to further discuss these issues.

COMMENT

The Federal election presents a crucial opportunity for Local Governments to shape public policy and secure support from major parties for their priorities. With the 2025 Federal Election expected to be closely contested, there will be heightened competition for ideas and influence. The presentation of WALGA's Federal Election Priorities, accompanied by active engagement with relevant Ministers, WA Federal Members and candidates, aims to ensure that the issues facing WA Local Governments are effectively addressed and prioritised by an incoming Government.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on the 2025 Federal Election.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder**
 Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

8.2 2025 STATE ELECTION

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on the 2025 State Election campaign.

IN BRIEF

- WALGA's State Election campaign has been running since November 2024, and aims to secure commitments from the major parties to the priority areas identified in *The West at its Best* policy platform.
- Since the beginning of the year, parties have been announcing a raft of commitments for the next term.
- WALGA has been successful in securing commitments to a range of initiatives that are aligned with our election priorities.

BACKGROUND

The State Election will be held on 8 March.

WALGA has been working to maximise the opportunities the 2025 State Election will bring for Local Governments through a range of activities.

- WALGA's 2024-25 State Budget Submission was framed with an eye to the 2025 Election.
- In March 2024, a workshop was held with the State Council to discuss the issues and focus areas for WALGA in the lead up to the State Election.
- WALGA has developed "The West at its Best" election policy platform and public campaign.

State Election Media Campaign

WALGA has generated significant earned media in relation to the State Election priorities, with 664 mentions of WALGA and President Karen Chappel from November to January. This equates to seven mentions a day.

Paid media as part of the public campaign has resulted in 4.6m impressions served across social, digital, out of home and outdoor media across WA. The paid and earned media has driven over 37,000 visits to the dedicated State Election microsite indicating a high level of engagement.

In terms of issues, the public has resonated strongly with four of the five issues that the paid campaign has focussed on. (Connected and Inclusive Communities - with Sport & Recreation achieving the highest interest, Safer Roads, Climate Resilience and Disaster Ready.) Low Carbon has received the least engagement across the social and programmatic campaign and are the least searched key words in Google.

2.4m of the total 4.6m impressions have been served through carousels, stories and polls on social media. Carousels displaying the 'under stress' and swipe right to see 'at its best' messaging has the highest engagement with over 56,000 people commenting and 'liking' posts.

Polls running on Safer Roads and Urban Canopy have the highest Click Through Rate (CTR). In terms of engagement by issue, Climate Resilience and Safer Roads have gained the most interaction in terms of comments, but when voting for the State to take action via the polls, 'Better sports facilities' has gained the highest votes from the public with 98% of respondents supportive, followed by 'More support for Volunteer fireies' with a supporter rate of 92%.

WALGA has also implemented a broad political engagement strategy in recent months, with meetings held with key Ministers, candidates, and the Opposition parties.

WALGA's advocacy has been successful in securing commitments that align with a number of the policy priorities identified in the *West at its Best* document. At the time of writing this report (3 February) the key commitments to WALGA's agenda include:

Labor

- Expansion of the regional road safety program to local roads (\$125 million).
- 23 new signalised crossings to replace warden-controlled children's crossings (\$17.7 million). Ten of these align with WALGA's list of priority crossings.
- Funding for six new Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) positions (\$3.5 million).

- Dedicated State Bushfire Mitigation Branch to undertake mitigation works on unallocated crown land and unmanaged reserves. Support Local Government to manage the risk on road verges and provide support during major incidents.
- Commitment to double Perth's tree canopy cover to 30% by 2040, new urban canopy growth program (\$10 million) and 'treebates' to encourage Western Australians to plant native trees.
- Regional housing package, including new and refurbished social housing, additional GROH homes and stamp duty relief for first homebuyers (\$145 million).
- Expansion of the PATS rebate by more than 50% and expansion to include dental services and allied health (\$34 million).
- Range of infrastructure projects to improve community sport and recreation facilities across the state (\$186 million), including \$30 million additional funding towards changing room upgrades, equipment and events to encourage more female sport participation.
- In the Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement that was released in mid-December 2024, the State Government launched Creative WA: A 10 year vision to grow and sustain our creative ecosystem. \$45 million over three years will be allocated to support upgrades for arts and cultural infrastructure across the State.

Nationals

- Emergency management initiatives including a \$45.5 million one-off payment to fill the backlog of Local Government Grant Scheme capital grant requests with an additional \$2.8 million increase per year over four years; and \$20 million over four years to fund the expansion of the Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM) Program.
- Regional headworks fund (\$1 billion).
- Safer local roads program, applying targeted treatments to 8,200km of local roads (\$276 million).
- Boost to Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) and expansion to allied health and dental services (\$100 million).
- Implement a comprehensive State Planning Policy for renewable energy, mandate community impact assessment and community benefit funds with a baseline contribution of 1.5%.
- Increase the Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund to \$40 million per annum and develop 10 year regional sporting plans.

Liberal

- Housing infrastructure investment fund to support enabling infrastructure such as sewerage, roads and water (\$500 million).
- Create a new Regional Housing Infrastructure Program, to support headworks in regional areas and unlock housing (\$100 million).
- Regional health initiatives including increasing PATS fuel and accommodation allowances, more career paramedics in regional WA, and patient transport in the Wheatbelt (\$87 million).

COMMENT

The State Election is an important opportunity for Local Governments to secure support from major parties for their priorities.

It is pleasing that there have been a number of commitments to important priorities for Local Governments.

With several weeks left in the campaign, WALGA will continue to advocate strongly for the remaining priority initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on the 2025 State Election campaign.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**
 Seconded: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton

Carried

8.3 Large Scale Renewable Energy Update

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on WALGA's renewable energy policy and advocacy activities.

IN BRIEF

- Western Australia's energy industry is transforming to achieve the goal of net zero emissions by 2050.
- Western Australia does not have a plan or framework that provides a consistent approach to how proponents of major energy projects consult with local communities and how they can share in the benefits.
- State Council adopted a suite of renewable energy related advocacy positions in September 2024.
- WALGA has been progressing a number of initiatives to support Local Governments since State Council endorsed three energy transition advocacy positions last year.
- In correspondence to WALGA, the Minister for Energy; Environment; Climate Action has acknowledged Local Governments' concerns and reinforced the role of Powering WA to engage with the sector to better understand the opportunities and challenges faced by their communities.

ATTACHMENT

- [Minister Whitby - Energy Transition Advocacy Letter](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to the following [WALGA advocacy positions](#):

- 6.16 Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework
- 6.17 Renewable Energy Facilities
- 6.18 Priority Agriculture

BACKGROUND

The 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting resolved *that WALGA establish and promote policies to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land*. Following on from this discussion, further conversations across WALGA Member Councils have led to the consideration of how local communities can be involved in, and benefit from, renewable energy projects.

After consultation with Members, discussions with State Governments and other jurisdictions, WALGA developed three advocacy policy positions related to the renewable energy transition. These were endorsed by all WALGA Zones and State Council at its September 2024 State Council Meeting. These positions form the basis of WALGA's advocacy on this topic and will be used to inform discussions with Government and advocate on behalf of our Members.

COMMENT

WALGA has progressed policy work to support Members with the renewable energy transition including:

- **Energy Transition Survey:** In September 2024, WALGA conducted a survey to capture data on Local Government sentiment on the energy transition. The survey was targeted towards Local Government CEOs.
- **WALGA Research Paper:** The paper outlines how other State Governments are responding to renewable energy projects and highlights relevant energy strategies and stakeholders in State and Federal Government.
- **Planning resource:** "Empowering Local Governments - Planning for Renewable Energy" provides an overview of the State and Local planning frameworks and tools available to Local Governments for managing renewable energy facility development. It also outlines the three development assessment pathways for renewable energy proponents.
- **Teams Group for Local Government Leaders:** A Teams Group was established for CEOs and Elected Members to facilitate continued collaboration and knowledge sharing between Local Governments. Both the research paper and planning resource have been shared in the group.
- **Large Scale Renewable Energy Forum:** The Forum brought together State Government, industry and Local Government to discuss the opportunities and challenges of large-scale renewable energy projects, and what support Local Governments need when it comes to engaging with proponents.

WALGA's advocacy is ongoing and includes a range of stakeholder engagement and public relations activities. These include:

- **Political and Government engagement**, including:
 - Meetings with relevant Ministers including the Premier, Minister for Planning, Minister for Energy, Minister for Local Government and the Leader of the Opposition.
 - Meetings with Ministerial Senior Policy Advisors.
 - WALGA President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP wrote to all relevant Ministers to provide them with WALGA's renewable energy advocacy positions
 - Renewable energy has been a key discussion item for WALGA's election advocacy, including in meetings with candidates.
 - WALGA has received correspondence from Minister for Energy; Environment; Climate Action (attached) acknowledging the concerns of many Local Governments and reinforcing the ongoing role for Powering WA to engage with the sector to better understand the opportunities and challenges faced by their communities.
 - Continued discussions with key government agencies including PoweringWA, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, Western Power and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.
- **Engagement with industry and other stakeholders** including ALGA, Clean Energy Council, Smart Energy Council, Curtin University, Conservation Council of WA and Re-Alliance.
- **Media** commentary centred on WALGA's renewable energy advocacy positions and related State Election Priorities:
 - An article mentioning WALGA's 2025 State Election Priority by The West Australian (*WALGA conference: Former WA Nationals leader Brendan Grylls warns WA is losing clean energy race*) on 9 October 2024 as a result of the 2024 WALGA Local Government Convention's 'State of Play' panel.
 - An article published in The Sunday Times on 5 January ([Regions want help in turbine tensions](#)), through online newspapers affiliated with Sunday Times/The West, and on ABC TV, in line with WALGA's State Election Priorities.
 - An 'Op-ed' piece by WALGA President Karen Chappel ([Locals must have input in renewable plans and the answer is blowing in the Wind](#)) that appeared alongside the Sunday Times article, espousing that WALGA and Local Governments want to see a framework produced by the State Government to assist industry proponents and Local Governments entering renewables discussions.
 - An article in The West Australian, and its affiliated regional newspapers, on 7 January (Blowing up in Mid West) which featured further comments from the WALGA President, including the pull quote "*The State Government needs to step up and set the framework to ensure that these projects leave a lasting legacy that is positive.*"
 - The Nationals WA have recently announced that if elected, they will implement a comprehensive State Planning Policy for renewable energy projects and ensure that regional communities are consulted, considered, and benefit from renewable developments proposed across Western Australia. WALGA put out a [Media Statement](#) in response to this announcement.
- **Promotion** through WALGA communication channels.
 - WALGA's Large Scale Renewable Energy Projects Forum was covered both on the day and post-event via [WALGA's social media channels](#).
 - The President's Op-ed were shared and supported through [WALGA's social media](#), website and LG Direct channels.

Key next steps for WALGA include:

- **Community Benefits and Engagement Guide:** WALGA is engaging a consultant to prepare a Community Benefits and Engagement Guide to assist Local Governments when working with proponents on large scale renewable energy projects. Interested Local Governments will have the chance to provide input into the Guide over the coming months. Key industry and government stakeholders will also be engaged throughout the process.
- **Political and Government engagement:** Discussions with relevant State Government agencies will continue in the lead up to, and after, the State election. Further meetings with relevant Ministers will be sought post State Government election.
- **Research on Local Government Rating:** WALGA is conducting research relating to Local Government rating and payment in lieu of rates in respect to renewable energy projects. This work will include a review of other States and Territories.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on WALGA's renewable energy policy and advocacy activities.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie***
 Seconded: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas*

Carried

8.4 2024 CoastWA Local Government Survey

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on the 2024 CoastWA Local Government Survey.

IN BRIEF

- An online survey of coastal and estuarine Local Governments was undertaken in October 2024.
- The purpose of the survey was to inform input into the development of CoastWA Phase 2 and the review of *State Planning Policy 2.6: Coastal* planning and guide the activities and priorities of the CoastWA Local Government Facilitator for the next two years.
- The survey was sent via email to all 52 coastal and estuarine Local Governments.
- Survey results indicated that Local Governments:
 - are increasingly having to act and respond to coastal hazards.
 - are heavily reliant on grant funding to implement coastal adaptation projects.
 - foresee needing to increase their spending on coastal adaptation over the next five years.
 - see the greatest barrier to implementation is a lack of budget and this has increased since the 2021 CoastWA Survey.
 - had largely not commenced planning for managed retreat (if identified in their CHRMAP) and that appropriate funding, legislative support and resourcing would be required to give them the certainty to do so.
 - saw value in the State Government implementing projects such as a state-wide community education campaign, coastal data collection and state-wide coastal hazard mapping.

ATTACHMENT

- [2024 CoastWA Local Government Survey – Preliminary Outcomes Report](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The outcomes of this survey support WALGA [advocacy policy position 6.8 Coastal Planning](#), which calls for:

1. *Equitable legislative, regulatory and policy changes that preserve public coastal access for current and future generations.*
2. *The provision of sustainable and adequate long-term funding for Local Governments to manage the impacts of coastal erosion and inundation.*

BACKGROUND

CoastWA is the State Government's strategic response to coastal hazards, providing grant funding for Local Government coastal adaptation projects and technical support and expertise through the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and Department of Transport. CoastWA also funds a CoastWA Local Government Facilitator based at WALGA to support coastal and estuarine Local Governments.

An online survey of coastal and estuarine Local Governments was undertaken in October 2024. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Inform input into the development of CoastWA Phase 2. The current CoastWA program ends in 2025-26 and planning has commenced for the next iteration of CoastWA.
- Inform input into the review of State Planning Policy 2.6: Coastal planning.
- Guide the activities and priorities of the CoastWA Local Government Facilitator for the next two years.
- Enable comparison to the 2021 CoastWA Survey.

The survey consisted of five sections.

1. Introduction
2. Coastal management and adaptation in your Local Government
3. Coastal hazard risk management and adaptation planning
4. State Planning Policy 2.6
5. CoastWA program

The Survey was sent via email to all 52 coastal and estuarine Local Governments. Responses were received from 28 Local Governments and one regional partnership representing a 54% response rate.

COMMENT

The *2024 CoastWA Survey Outcomes Report* demonstrates that coastal hazards are an increasingly important issue for coastal and estuarine Local Governments. Adapting to coastal hazards is challenging and requires long term planning, engagement with communities and significant cost. Increased funding, support and resourcing from State Government is needed to help Local Governments adapt to coastal hazards and ensure a sustainable and resilient coastline for all.

Through its involvement in the development of CoastWA Phase 2, WALGA will strongly advocate on behalf of coastal and estuarine Local Governments. In particular, for increased funding and resourcing for Local Government and for State Government to take a greater leadership role in planning for managed retreat.

Through our participation in the Intergovernmental Coastal Hazards Working Group (along with ALGA) we will continue to advocate to the Federal Government to take on a greater leadership role and to support all levels of government to adapt to coastal hazards.

The results of the survey will also be used to inform a sector submission into the review of *State Planning Policy 2.6: Coastal planning* when advertised.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on the 2024 CoastWA Local Government Survey.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**
 Seconded: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton

Carried

8.5 Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer Update

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on the Polyphagous shot-hole borer response and WALGA advocacy.

IN BRIEF

- In March 2024, State Council considered the Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) biosecurity response as an emerging issue, noting:
 - The significant threat PSHB presents to growth and retention of urban forests.
 - WALGA and Local Government engagement in the PSHB response.
 - The importance of shared surveillance by government, industry and community to assist with eradication efforts.
 - The need for funding to replace trees lost due to PSHB and ameliorate the long-term urban canopy impact.
- Over the past year, WALGA and Local Governments have escalated PSHB advocacy and political engagement, amid concerns that insufficient resources and State Government process issues will fail to eradicate the borer.
- Advocacy priorities have included:
 - Recognition of the impact of PSHB on the urban canopy, and funding for replacement of trees lost to PSHB infestation.
 - Increased resourcing of the eradication response, including funding for Local Government in recognition of the sector's significant (>\$2 million) investment towards response operations to date.
 - A more efficient and agile response.
 - Research on innovative control strategies, biology and behaviour in WA's environment, and new approaches to improve surveillance efficiency.
- Advocacy wins have included:
 - The State Government's investment of \$7.2 million in the [WA Tree Recovery Program for PSHB](#).
 - WA Agricultural Research Collaboration (WAARC) delivery of \$2 million for [PSHB Research in late 2024](#).
- Despite some progress over the past year, further action is needed. WALGA is advocating for:
 - More funding and resources to support the PSHB response, including for Local Government.
 - Local Government to be represented on the national body overseeing the development of the new national PSHB Emergency Plant Pest Response Plan, which will supersede the existing plan by June 2025.
 - Research and development to be embedded and funded as part of the PSHB Response Plan.
 - Removal of restrictions on access to detailed data on the location of infested premises and positive trap detections to enable Local Governments to better target surveillance efforts and assist with early detection.
 - An intensified public awareness campaign.
- WALGA is currently preparing a submission to the National Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests on key priorities for inclusion in the new PSHB Response Plan.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item is relevant to the [4.4 Post Border Biosecurity](#), [4.5 Urban Forest](#) and [4.7 PSHB](#) Advocacy Positions.

BACKGROUND

PSHB was first detected in East Fremantle in September 2021. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is leading the national response to PSHB, with costs shared by the Australian and state and territory governments under the National Emergency Plant Pest Response Arrangement. \$41.29 million has been allocated for the response, which runs until June 2025.

The PSHB Quarantine Area (QA) covers all Local Governments in the Perth metropolitan area. The QA is divided into Zone A, comprising inner Perth metropolitan areas that have higher levels of infestation and Zone B, outer metropolitan suburbs that have fewer or no infested trees. Zone B is intended to act as a 'buffer zone' between areas of higher infestations and the remainder of the State. Quarantine restrictions are in place to stop the movement of wood and plant material from Zone A into Zone B, and from Zone A and B to outside the QA.

As of the end of January 2025, DPIRD has:

- conducted 277,901 visits and created 115,966 unique premises
- taken 176,461 trap samples
- removed 4,249 trees
- undertaken 1,084 pruning treatments:
 - *Robinia pseudoacacia* (Robinia, black locust, mop top robinia), being so abundant in Perth, is the most heavily affected species, with 1,609 trees treated
 - 208 host tree species are affected by PSHB in WA
 - 105 host tree species have been identified as reproductive (PSHB is able to complete its full lifecycle in these hosts).

DPIRD is also:

- Updating the [WA PSHB Host list](#), including a susceptibility to PSHB attack rating system.
- Delivering in-house PSHB training for Local Government staff, with over 50 training sessions delivered for over 30 Local Governments.
- Running webinars for regional Local Governments and Emergency Management Committees to assist with awareness and preparedness.
- Running community information sessions in collaboration with Local Governments.
- Holding monthly meetings between DPIRD case managers and Local Government staff to discuss surveillance activities and tree management, including a collaborative approach on the development of Tree Management Plans for Infested Premises.
- Providing monthly PSHB 'heat maps' to Local Governments (total of 18) that have signed a Confidentiality Deed Poll.
- Undertaking a range of public communication activities, including social media, public signage and posters (including provision to Local Government), deploying electronic traffic signs on major roads exiting the Quarantine Area and a publishing a monthly PSHB eNewsletter (first edition released October 2024, subscribe [here](#)).
- Leading the development of a new National PSHB Response Plan, for the consideration of the National Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests.

COMMENT

Over the past year WALGA and Local Governments have undertaken significant PSHB advocacy and actions, including:

- Expending more than \$2 million on PSHB surveillance, tree pruning, removal, and tailored communications to local communities.
- Raising the profile of this issue, garnering significant media interest.
- Ongoing political and departmental engagement, including meetings with the Premier and Minister for Agriculture and Food, Forestry and Small Business; Environment; the DPIRD Director General and senior staff.
- Successful advocacy, leading to the Government's announcement of a \$7.2M [WA Tree Recovery Program](#) for PSHB, which will be available to Local Government and the community this autumn. WALGA provided input into the design of the funding packaging, based on experience with the 2024/25 Urban Greening Grant Program.
- \$2M funding has been allocated to the WA Agricultural Research Collaborative to provide for research into PSHB eradication. WALGA and a representative from the sector provided input into the scoping of the research priorities. WALGA is also the nominated contact for Local Governments wishing to partner on proposed research projects.

Despite some progress over the past year, further action is needed. WALGA is advocating for:

- More funding and resources to support the PSHB response, including for Local Government.
- Local Government representation on the national body overseeing the development of the new national PSHB Emergency Plant Pest Response Plan, which will supersede the existing plan by June 2025.
- Research and development to be embedded and funded as part of the PSHB Response Plan.

- Greater transparency, including the removal of restrictions on access to detailed data on the location of infested premises and positive trap detections to enable Local Governments to better target surveillance efforts and assist with early detection and access to the National Response Plan for PSHB.
- An intensified public awareness campaign.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on the Polyphagous shot-hole borer response and WALGA advocacy.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

8.6 December 2024 Economic Briefing

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the December 2024 Economic Briefing.

IN BRIEF

- The latest WALGA Quarterly Economic Briefing was released in December 2024.
- The Australian economy grew just 0.8% in the year to September. Western Australia's economy is the standout performer nationally, with State Final Demand increasing 2.5% and employment up 4.5% in the last 12 months.
- The WA Treasury released the 2024–25 Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement on 23 December 2024.
- Local Government costs increased 3.3% over the last 12 months, with employee costs a key driver.
- The next Economic Briefing will be released in March 2025.

ATTACHMENT

- [Economic Briefing](#)

BACKGROUND

The latest WALGA Quarterly Economic Briefing was released in December 2024.

The Australian economy grew just 0.8% in the last 12 months, propped up by public sector spending and population growth. The WA domestic economy continues to outperform the nation with State Final Demand increasing 2.5% and employment up 4.5% in the last 12 months. The RBA kept interest rates on hold in December as inflation continues to fall slowly but remains above the target band. Inflation in WA is higher than the national average with increasing housing costs a key concern.

The labour market in WA continues to be tight with low unemployment and high workforce participation. Wages growth continues but at a slower rate with public sector wages growing at a slower pace than the private sector

Population growth is slowing across the country but remains high. WA's population growth is higher still. WA housing completions and building approvals are increasing but remain below the level required to meet demand and national housing targets.

Local Government costs increased by 3.3% over the last 12 months. Employee costs are a key driver of price increases. Construction costs have increased by approximately 20% over the last three years. The rate of price rises has slowed on average across the State as global supply chain constraints have eased and post-pandemic stimulus works its way through the system. The strong infrastructure and construction pipeline could lead to increased construction costs in the short term.

COMMENT

The WA Treasury released the 2024–25 Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement on 23 December 2024. The State Government highlighted the \$3.1 billion surplus in 2023-24, up from May's estimate of \$2.6 billion, with surpluses forecast for the next three years. Higher than expected income from taxes and royalties drove this increased surplus. Taxation income benefited from higher prices, leading to an additional \$1.4 billion in duty collections and higher than expected car sales boosting motor vehicle taxes by \$895 million. Income from royalties was up \$1.3 billion off the back of iron ore (+\$1.7 billion) and gold (+\$608 million) which more than offset falls in lithium (-\$673 million) and nickel (-\$240 million).

While some additional income was banked to increase the surplus, expenditure was also up, with increased spending on services to support the increased population, in particular in health, housing, communities, justice and education. The major new spending announcement in the Mid-year Review was the \$400 million Housing Enabling Infrastructure Fund, which seeks to increase housing supply by funding water and power infrastructure.

WA Treasury expects the domestic economy to continue its strong run of growth, with State Final Demand forecast to increase by 3.5% in 2024-25 and 3.25% in each of the next two years. The public sector is a major contributor to this growth with Government consumption forecast to increase 5.5% in 2024-25 driven by the increase in services delivery and cost of living support. Government investment is expected to increase 7.0% in 2024-25, however the public sector is forecast to contribute less to economic growth in the out years as population growth slows and the State's record infrastructure spending slows.

As growth in the public sector eases, it is the private sector that is forecast to drive economic growth. Dwelling investment is forecast to jump 11.25% in 2024-25 as the residential construction industry ramps up and more houses are built. Household consumption in WA has held up better than in other states due to the strong economy and population growth. Investment from business is expected to grow just 1.0% in 2024-25 after a jump of 12.7% in 2023-24. This is expected to increase to 3.25% in 2025-26 due to the strong pipeline of projects in the mining, renewables, and infrastructure sectors.

WA Treasury Economic Forecasts

Mid-Year Review 2024-25	2022-23 % Actual	2023-24 % Actual	2024-25 % Forecast	2025-26 % Forecast	2026-27 % Forecast
Gross State Product	3.5	0.5	2.25	2.5	2.5
Household Consumption	3.5	3.1	2.5	3.0	3.0
Business Investment	4.5	12.7	1.0	3.25	5.5
Dwelling Investment	-2.7	4.1	11.25	9.75	5.5
Goods Exports	4.7	-3.7	0.5	1.5	0.5
Goods Imports	7.8	9.1	0.75	1.75	2.75
Employment Growth	3.1	3.8	2.5	1.75	1.5
Unemployment Rate	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.25	4.5
Wage Price Index	4.2	4.2	3.75	3.5	3.0
Population	3.2	2.8	1.9	1.8	1.8

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA December 2024 Economic Briefing.

RESOLUTION: **Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas**
 Seconded: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton

Carried

8.7 Flying Minute Submission on the Productivity Commission Inquiry – Opportunities in the Circular Economy

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the Submission on the Productivity Commission Inquiry – Opportunities in the Circular Economy, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

IN BRIEF

- The Productivity Commission is inquiring into Australia's opportunities for a circular economy to improve materials productivity and efficiency in ways that benefit the economy and the environment.
- The Inquiry Terms of Reference were released on 23 August 2024 and a Call for Submissions Paper was released on 16 September 2024. The consultation closed on 1 November. WALGA requested, and received, an extension to 15 November 2024.
- WALGA's Submission identifies WA circular economy success stories, key circular economy opportunities, barriers for Local Government in Western Australia and roles for Government.
- The transition to a circular economy has the potential to reduce cost of living pressures, maximise the use of resources and reduce a range of environmental impacts associated with the manufacture, distribution and post-consumption management of products.
- For these benefits to be realised, action is needed from all levels of Government to change legislation and policies where required, put in place relevant incentives and lead by example.
- The draft Submission was endorsed by MWAC on 23 October 2024 and by State Council via Flying Minute on 13 November 2024. It was provided to the Productivity Commission on 15 November 2024.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute Submission on the Productivity Commission Inquiry.](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's Submission aligns with [WALGA Advocacy Positions:](#)

- 7.1 Waste Management Legislation
- 7.8 Waste Management Education
- 7.10 Household Hazardous Waste
- 7.12 Landfill Ban
- 7.13 Recovered Materials Framework
- 7.15 Product Stewardship

BACKGROUND

In October 2022, Australia's Environment Ministers committed to accelerate the transition to a circular economy by 2030. As part of this work, the Productivity Commission is undertaking an inquiry into circular economy and has released a Call for Submissions Paper. This is the first stage of the Commission's work and further opportunities to comment will be available in February 2025 (with submissions due April 2025).

The Productivity Commission defines a circular economy as "an economic strategy that maintains the value of materials for as long as possible and ensures materials are used efficiently across all phases of their life cycle".

The Productivity Commission states:

International studies suggest that a more circular economy supports higher economic growth and productivity, including by increasing materials productivity (how much output is produced per unit of raw input). Australia currently has the fourth lowest rate of materials productivity in the OECD. We generate US\$1.20 of economic output for every kg of materials consumed, which is under half the OECD benchmark of US\$2.50. However, there is currently limited analysis of these matters, including the relative importance of these opportunities and how they should be measured and realised.

This Inquiry follows the Commission's earlier Inquiry into the [Right to Repair](#), on which WALGA made several [Submissions](#). Repair is one strategy to assist in developing a more circular economy.

MWAC endorsed the draft Submission to the Circular Economy Inquiry at its meeting on 23 October 2024.

COMMENT

The Productivity Commission's Paper identifies a range of potential benefits from a circular economy in Australia, including improving economic, environmental and social outcomes.

WALGA's Submission was informed by Local Government feedback and has the following key focus areas:

- The important role of procurement as a way of embedding a more circular approach.
- Quality assurance and market development for recovered materials, to ensure end users have high confidence in the quality and safety of products.
- Economic shifts that have occurred and facilitate a more circular economy approach, for example, the sharing economy.
- Designing products for circularity and repair, to ensure all products entering the market are designed to maintain the highest value as long as possible.
- Regionally focused systems that facilitate waste being received and processed close to the source, in order to create and develop local industry and employment opportunities.
- Specific programs and incentives to shift consumer behaviours, alongside a mandated product stewardship framework which ensures all products manufactured, distributed and sold are more easily reused, repaired, recovered or recycled.
- To effectively transition toward a circular economy, Government must take a leading role in embedding circular practices across a range of industries.

The Submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 13 November 2024 and provided to the Productivity Commission on 15 November 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA submission on the Productivity Commission Inquiry – Opportunities in the Circular Economy, as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder

Carried

9. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Policy Team and Committee Reports

The following provides an outline of the key activities of the Policy Teams and Committee Reports since the last State Council meeting.

9.1 Infrastructure Policy Team Report

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Note the report from the Infrastructure Policy Team for the 5 March 2025 meeting.
2. Determine to:
 - a. Delete Advocacy Position 5.2.8 (Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2008 – 2020).
 - b. Amend the title of Advocacy Position 5.2.7 from Road Safety Strategy (Imagine Zero) to Driving Change Road Safety Strategy 2020-2030.
 - c. Delete the fourth dot point in Advocacy Position 5.2.7 “...the retention of WA’s Default Open Speed Limit at 110 km per hour and opposes the proposed reduction to 100 km per hour...”

The Infrastructure Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

- Transport
- Infrastructure
- Road Safety
- Underground power
- Street lighting

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting held on 27 November 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

WALGA’s advocacy positions are reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain contemporary. The Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2008 – 2020 was superseded with “Driving Change, Road Safety Strategy for Western Australia 2020 – 2030”. Advocacy Position 5.2.7 refers to this, the current strategy.

Advocacy Position 5.2.7 was endorsed by State Council during the consultation phase of the current road safety strategy. At that time the name of the strategy had not been determined. The proposed title change reflects the final name of the strategy.

In May 2023 WALGA’s State Council adopted advocacy position 5.2.3 Speed Management Reform which provides a set of principles for guiding WALGA’s advocacy on the many and varied aspects of the complex topic of travel speeds in the context of the road networks managed by the 139 Local Governments in WA. It is proposed that this May 2023 advocacy position replaces the previous position in scope, currency and utility.

The previous position was established on the basis of consultation and feedback (by a consultant on behalf of the WA Government) from some Local Governments in the early 2000s. Both the consultation question and the position are narrow and specific in scope.

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

The Policy Team progressed actions and advocacy in relation to:

- Regional telecommunications service levels, including impact of closure of the 3G network.
- Development of contemporary advocacy positions relating to active transport.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the report from the Infrastructure Policy Team and recommendation as presented.

RESOLUTION: Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*
Seconded: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas*

Carried

9.4 **Environment Policy Team Report**

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Environment Policy Team meeting report to the 5 March 2025 meeting.

The Environment Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

- *Climate change*
- *Native vegetation and biodiversity*
- *Biosecurity*
- *Water resources*
- *Sustainability*
- *Planning and building*

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Environment Policy Team at its meeting held on 11 December 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

The Environment Policy Team agreed to recommend that State Council replace WALGA's existing Advocacy Position 4.1 Climate Change (see [item 8.1](#)).

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

[Item 10.5](#): Polyphagous shot-hole borer Update

The Policy Team discussed the following matters referred by Zones:

- **Whale carcass management:** Goldfields Esperance Country Zone requests that WALGA advocate for a government policy change to allow towing of whale carcasses before they wash ashore. WALGA notes the feedback and will investigate if there is further action on the issue.
- **Service Stations / Sensitive Land uses:** South Metropolitan Zone requests that WALGA supports the review of the EPA and advocates for the review of the GS3. WALGA will raise the need for a review of this Guideline through its representation on the EPA Stakeholder Reference Group, then consider further advocacy on this matter.
- **State Planning Policy 3.6 - Infrastructure Contributions (Community Infrastructure Cap):** North Metropolitan Zone recommends that WALGA advocate to the State Government for indexation of the community infrastructure cap defined in the State Planning Policy. WALGA made a submission strongly opposing the introduction of a contribution cap. WALGA is also working with the Growth Alliance Perth and Peel Local Governments to develop a set of advocacy positions in relation to the development contribution plan arrangements.

3. PORTFOLIO UPDATES

WALGA staff provided the Policy Team with updates on:

- Polyphagous shot-hole borer
- Review of the DAP advocacy position
- Avian Influenza (H5 Clade 2.3.4.4b)
- National Water Agreement.

The Policy Team also noted that the development of an updated Water Advocacy Position is underway.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the report by the Environment Policy Team as presented.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie
Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

9.5 **Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) Report**

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the report from the Municipal Waste Advisory Council to the 5 March 2025 meeting.

This report provides an update on matters considered since the last State Council meeting by the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC), at a meeting held on 11 December 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

MWAC agreed to replace the Waste Management Legislation Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.1 Waste Management Legislation (see [item 8.2](#)).

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

MWAC considered the following matters:

- Circular Economy Advocacy Position: WALGA's advocacy in relation to circular economy has identified that action is required from all levels of Government. The development of an advocacy position on Circular Economy is far broader than the waste management considerations. Comprehensive consultation on the advocacy position is planned for 2025.
- E-Cigarette Collection Study: Following the successful completion of the Collection Study, MWAC discussed advocacy options to ensure the community access to safe disposal/recycling avenues for e-cigarettes, with a focus on minimising risks to waste management collection and processing infrastructure.
- Waste Processing Contingency Planning: WALGA has consistently advocated for effective contingency planning for waste management, most recently as part of the review of the State Waste Strategy. Several recent issues have highlighted the challenges facing the sector and the limited options for processing of some materials. MWAC discussed governance models and contingency planning options for Western Australia.

3. UPDATES

MWAC noted the following updates:

- Policy Statement Review Update
- Better Practice Document Review Update
- Review of DWER Waste Education
- Review of Recycling and Waste Reduction Act
- Review of Local Government Waste Reporting Requirements
- Queensland Fruit Fly (Qfly) Outbreak
- MWAC 30 Year Anniversary.

RECOMMENDATION:

That GVROC note the report from the Municipal Waste Advisory Council to the 5 March 2025 meeting.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

10. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Organisational Key Activity Reports

- 10.1 Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio
- 10.2 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio
- 10.3 Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio
- 10.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio

GVROC COMMENT:

GVROC note the Organisation Key Activity Reports as provided in the State Council 5 March 2025 Agenda Items.

RESOLUTION: *Moved: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton*
 Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

11. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda - Policy Forums and Other Reports

The following provides an outline of the key activities of the Association's Policy Forums that have met since the last State Council meeting.

11.1 President's Report

WALGA Recommendation

That the President's Report for March 2025 be received. (refer to Attachment 5)

11.2 CEO's Report

WALGA Recommendation

That the CEO's Report for March 2025 be received.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the President's and CEO's Reports for March 2025 to be presented at the meeting as received.

RESOLUTION: *Moved: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*
 Seconded: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Carried

12. Review of WALGA State Council Agenda – State Council Status Report

12.1 Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions - To the March 2025 State Council Meeting

GVROC COMMENT:

Additional to the Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions, **Attachment 6** provides the relevant Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Status Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the Complete State Council Status Report to the March 2025 State Council meeting and the Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Status Report.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*
Seconded: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas*

Carried

13. LATE ITEMS as notified, introduced by decision of the Meeting

14. FUTURE MEETINGS

The following remaining dates in 2025 have been set for the GVROC meetings.

- **28 March 2025** in Esperance (to be hosted by Shire of Esperance)
- **30 May 2025** in Norseman (to be hosted by the Shire of Dundas)
- **25 July 2025** in Kambalda (to be hosted by Shire of Coolgardie)
- **October 2025** (Date and Dinner TBC aligned with WALGA Convention and AGM in Perth)
- **28 November 2025** in Leonora (to be hosted by the shire of Leonora)

The following are the WALGA State Council meeting dates in 2025 with suggested GVROC Zoom video conference meeting dates prior to these to inform the GVROC's representatives attending the meetings with relevant input for State Council Agenda Items:

- 7 May 2025 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **24 April 2025**
- 2 July 2025 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **20 June 2025**
- 4-5 September 2025 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **22 August 2025**
- 3 December 2025 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **14 November 2025**

15. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:35am.