



GVROC Council Meeting to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items

Unconfirmed Minutes

Friday 21 June 2024
Zoom Videoconference, commencing at 9.00am

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GOLDFIELDS VOLUNTARY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS (GVROC)

Videoconference meeting of the GVROC Council to consider WALGA State Council Agenda Items was held Friday 21 June 2024 starting 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 Meetings to be held on 10 July 2024.

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.

Nil.

3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Attendance

Cr Mal Cullen (Chair)	President, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr Tracey Rathbone	Councillor, 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 Wes Graham	Councillor, Shire of Esperance
Mr Shane Burge	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 Glenda Teede	CEO, Shire of Menzies
Mr David Mosel	CEO, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
Mr Andrew Mann	Executive Officer, GVROC

3.2 Apologies

Mr James Trail	CEO, Shire of Coolgardie
Cr Wayne Johnson	Councillor, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
Cr Sharon Warner	Councillor, Shire of Dundas
Cr Ron Chambers	President 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
Cr Peter Grundy	President, Shire of Wiluna
Cr Ane Koroicure	Councillor, Shire of Wiluna
Mr Rob Stewart	A/CEO, Shire of Wiluna
Cr Damian McLean	President, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku

3.3 Guests

Nil

3.4 WALGA Representatives

Negar Nili Policy Officer, Transport and Roads
Sarah Coles Policy Officer, Environment

3.5 DLGSC Representatives

Nil – see DLGSC report (**Attachment 3**)

2. Regional telecommunications survey – 2 ways to have your say

Rural, regional, and remote Australians have another way to give feedback on telecommunications issues with the release of the first ever Regional Telecommunications Review survey.

The Review, which takes place every three years, sees the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee examine the experiences of people in regional, rural, and remote parts of Australia with telecommunications delivery, as well as considering the unique needs of First Nations communities. Previous Reviews have seen a number of major initiatives announced and delivered, such as the Mobile Black Spot Program and the National Audit of Mobile Coverage.

There are two ways to have your say : face-to-face consultation in various towns or providing an online submission.

- **Learn more:** www.rtirc.gov.au and [Chair's media release](#)
- **Have your say:** <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/have-your-say/2024-regional-telecommunications-review>
- **Closes:** 31 July 2024
- **Help:** RTIRC@infrastructure.gov.au

RECOMMENDATION:

That the matters for noting as listed be received and for GVROC LGAs to individually action as required.

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

Carried

4.4 Correspondence for Noting

The following correspondence was received in relation to the letter sent from the last GVROC State Council meeting in April 2024 in support of the Great Southern Country Zone's request for advocacy to improve education opportunities in regional Western Australia.

From: Chantelle O'Brien <cobrien@walga.asn.au>
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2024 12:31 PM
To: shire.president <shire.president@coolgardie.wa.gov.au>
Cc: mannadvisory@bigpond.com
Subject: GSCZ - Education advocacy through Country Zones

Dear Cr Malcolm Cullen, Zone Chair

On behalf of the Great Southern Country Zone, I extend our sincere appreciation for the Goldfields-Esperance Country Zone's resolution at its April 2024 meeting in support of our request for advocacy to improve education opportunities in regional Western Australia.

The Great Southern Country Zone values the opportunity to work collaboratively with Zones across WA to achieve improved outcomes for all our communities.

Kind regards
Cr Scott Crosby
Chair, Great Southern Country Zone

RECOMMENDATION:

That the correspondence for noting as listed above be received.

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

Carried

5. DLGSC REPORT

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

Attachment: DLGSC report – June 2024 – WALGA Zone meetings (**Attachment 3**)

Background:

DLGSC have provided its June 2024 report for consideration at all WALGA Zone meetings as per the **Attachment 2**.

Comment:

DLGSC have requested that if WALGA zones have any questions on the report, 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.

RECOMMENDATION

The GVROC notes the DLGSC report June 2024 as presented.

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

Carried

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 10 July 2024 can be found at **Attachment 4**.

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 Caravan Park and Camping Grounds Regulations

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council endorse a new Caravan Park and Camping Grounds Regulations Advocacy Position:

Part 2 of the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 should be amended to allow Local Governments to:

- 1. Consider camping on private property for a period of greater of three months.**
- 2. Establish policy to guide approvals beyond 3 months to ensure that camping is locally appropriate and provide for circumstances where caravans, predominantly in the form of tiny homes on wheels, can be occupied on a more permanent basis.**

IN BRIEF:

- Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOWs) are an emerging form of housing that offers an alternative and affordable housing option that can assist in addressing the current housing shortage.
- THOWs are classified as caravans under the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995* (the Act) and the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997* (the Regulations).
- The Regulations restrict the length of occupation of THOWs.
- A new advocacy position proposes that the Regulations be amended to allow THOWs to be occupied for longer periods and for Local Governments to be able to establish policy to guide these longer approvals.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed the draft advocacy position on 29 May 2024.

ATTACHMENT

- Policy Statement – Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

A new Advocacy Position for Caravan and Camping Grounds Regulations is proposed.

BACKGROUND:

Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOWs) are an emerging form of housing; however, they do not fit neatly into existing regulations, resulting in high levels of uncertainty pursuing this accommodation for long term occupation.

A THOW that is capable of being transported by function of its own wheels capable of supporting its weight is classified as a caravan and governed and regulated under the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995* (the Act) and the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997* (the Regulations). A caravan is not classified as a building and therefore is not governed by planning and building legislation in the same manner as other forms of development.

Under the Regulations, occupation of a caravan or sleeping in a vehicle on private property is restricted to 3 days in any consecutive period of 28 days. As specified in Part 2 11 (2)(b) of the Regulations Local Governments have the capacity to approve this for up to 3 months and the Minister for Local Government has the capacity to approve for up to 12 months.

While a 3-month approval may suit some circumstances, it can be insufficient, particularly in the context of long-term rentals shortages being experienced in regional areas. The option of delegating the capacity to issue 12-month approvals to Local Government has been investigated but is not possible under the current legislation.

Both the Shire of Denmark and the Shire of Augusta Margaret River's Local Planning Strategies promote establishing approval pathways for this form of accommodation to add to the mix of housing options available. These Local Governments have been investigating this for several years, including participating in a working group established in 2023 with the Australian Tiny Homes Association and the Shires of Esperance and Bridgetown-Greenbushes.

The Great Southern Country and South West Country Zones at their respective April 2024 meetings endorsed the following motion:

1. *Supports changes to Part 2(b) of the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 that allow Local Governments to consider camping on private property for a period of greater than three months.*
2. *Allows Local Governments to establish policy to guide approvals beyond 3 months to ensure that camping is locally appropriate and provide for circumstances where tiny homes can be occupied on a more permanent basis; and*
3. *Calls on WALGA to adopt a sector wide advocacy position in relation to 1 and 2, above.*

The new advocacy position was developed from these motions and endorsed by the Environmental Policy Team at their meeting on the 29 May 2024.

COMMENT:

A lack of housing is a key issue facing Western Australia and is a particular challenge in regional areas. THOWs offer an alternative and affordable housing option that can assist in addressing the immediate housing shortage.

Both zone resolutions propose changes to the standards contained in Part 2 of the Regulations to enable Local Government to approve occupation of a caravan for a period greater than 3 months, as well as the capacity to establish policy settings to ensure that the location, placement, and type of caravan (i.e. THOWs) is appropriate for the amenity of the locality. This would only require minor changes to the Regulations.

This would allow a Local Government to 'opt in' via preparation of a policy to enable longer term use of caravans on private land, generally in the form of THOWs, beyond three months, but would not compel those Local Governments that do not wish to do so.

Local Governments could stipulate through policy that THOWs would be an appropriate form of accommodation for longer term occupation, as opposed to a conventional caravan or other form of accommodation design for immediate movement, where shorter periods may be more appropriate.

It is not intended that caravans be located on private lots permanently but instead allow for their use as temporary accommodation, albeit for longer periods of time, to help alleviate the current housing crisis.

Local Governments in the South West and Great Southern regions have directly approached the Minister for Local Government on this issue and have received positive feedback to these proposed changes.

The sector has previously requested a review of the *Caravan and Camping Ground Act 1995* and associated regulations specifically to address manufactured homes on caravan sites. The Act is over 25 years old, and a comprehensive review is required to address numerous matters. However, it is recommended that the advocacy position specifically addresses and requests immediate amendment to Part 2 of the Regulations as separate and urgent review given it will assist in alleviating the immediate housing shortage specifically in regional areas.

RECOMMENDATION

The GVROC note and support the WALGA Recommendation on the basis of the following comments and concerns to be noted by WALGA and State Council.

- **The GVROC requests consideration in the policy regarding the ability of LGAs to still be able to issue move on notices for THOWs, when necessary, and ensure the regulations if amended do not prevent this and allow them to become permanent fixtures.**
- **While noted that the intent of the policy is specifically around caravans and camping, in the Goldfields region there are mining companies already exploiting the use of THOWs in the form of semi-trailers with worker accommodation modules being driven in and positioned for use. As these modules are contained on wheels they would fit the definition of a THOW under this policy, and this type of use is not supported by the GVROC.**

- **The GVROC request that WALGA undertake further work and develop templates around local government laws on this matter to show how it will operate, and the impacts to be implied on LGAs to manage this.**

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

Carried

7.2 2024 Audit Experience Survey Results and Advocacy Position

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council:

- 1. Note the Audit Experience Survey Results Summary; and**
- 2. Amend Advocacy Position 2.2.2 Local Government Audit Process to remove point 7 as it has been achieved.**

IN BRIEF:

- WALGA, in partnership with Local Government Professionals WA (LG Professionals), has recently conducted a survey of the Local Government sector to seek feedback on the annual audit process.
- The 2024 survey was based on the inaugural audit experience survey conducted last year, allowing for direct comparison of results over time.
- Five key emerging issues were identified following the 2023 survey, and these areas demonstrated varying levels of improvement this year:
 - timeframe and delays;
 - additional workload on Local Government staff;
 - cost;
 - inconsistent advice from contract Auditors and the Office of the Auditor General (OAG); and
 - asset valuation requirements.
- An outcome of advocacy efforts last year was the achievement of a review of the application of Fair Value principles, particularly as applied in audit related asset valuation.
- It is recommended that the WALGA Advocacy Position on Local Government Audit Process (position 2.2.2) be updated to reflect this achievement.
- An initial meeting with the OAG has recently been held to discuss the outcomes from the survey.
- WALGA and LG Professionals will continue to work with the OAG to reform the audit process in line with sector feedback, with a particular focus on those areas of concern identified in the 2024 survey results.
- This item was considered at the Governance Policy Team held on 15 May 2024, where the recommendation was supported.

ATTACHMENT

- Audit Experience Survey Results Summary

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's current Advocacy Position in relation to the Local Government audit process was updated in July 2023 following last year's audit experience survey.

2.2.2 Local Government Audit Process

WALGA advocate to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to reform the audit process for Local Governments by seeking:

- 1. Audits of Local Governments are completed and reported on in a timely manner and that the processes, procedures and scope of audits are consistently applied.*
- 2. That the OAG review the requirements for pre-audit information with a view to reducing the need for additional information where possible;*
- 3. That the OAG review their costing formulae for Local Government audits and show constraint in audit cost increases;*
- 4. That the OAG provide a breakdown on the cost of the audit and justification for any variance to the estimate to the Local Government as part of the final billing process;*
- 5. That auditors be required to improve their communication and information management and avoid repeated requests for information that has already been provided or that is publicly available;*
- 6. That Local Governments only be required to communicate with contract Auditors (unless the OAG is directly auditing the Local Government) and the onus be placed on the contract Auditors to confirm their advice with the OAG before instructing the Local Government;*
- 7. In-conjunction with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, review the application of Fair Value principles in the context of the audit; and*

8. *Seek an opportunity for Local Government to make representations in relation to any adverse findings prior to the publication of the report.*

BACKGROUND

Responsibility for financial auditing of Local Governments in WA transitioned from private auditors to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) with the proclamation of the *Local Government Amendment (Auditing) Act 2017*. Since this time, there have been a range of comments and criticisms of the audit experience from the Local Government sector.

Last year, WALGA partnered with Local Government Professionals WA (LG Professionals) to produce a survey of Local Governments' annual audit experience. The survey has recently been repeated for 2024 to create a comparison over time and measure any shift in the experience of the sector since last year's survey.

The survey was designed to enable the Associations to provide consistent and constructive advice to the OAG. The OAG is again supportive of the process and welcomes the contribution from the peak bodies to inform their continued improvement.

COMMENT

The 2024 survey was distributed to all 139 Local Governments. A total of 83 responded, compared to 91 in 2023.

The survey was largely comprised of the same questions as last year, with most framed as a statement asking respondents to answer in one of five ways:

1. Strongly disagree;
2. Disagree;
3. Neutral;
4. Agree; or
5. Strongly agree.

Overall, the results and comments from the 2024 survey highlight an improving audit scenario when compared with last year. Comparison of results in the five key emerging issue areas identified in the 2023 report (which formed the basis for WALGA's advocacy efforts to the OAG) demonstrate notable improvements in most areas.

Timeframe and delays

Satisfaction with the audit completion timeframes was significantly improved, from 48% last year to 82% this year. Whilst problems are still evident in individual circumstances, systemic issues like managing auditor's leave, negotiating timeframe variations and managing the fair value process are largely being overcome in the majority of situations.

Additional workload on Local Government staff

60% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that "there was additional workload placed on Local Government staff during the conduct of the audit, beyond the tasks anticipated in the pre-audit preparation advice". Only 15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Concerns remain from last year around multiple responses to the same questions, lost or misplaced information, and the need for additional background explanations to auditors. The current survey results correspond almost exactly with last year, where respondents noted that the tasks expected of Local Government staff "far exceeded" what was anticipated, and this led to a "very high workload" for staff and a strain on resources.

Relatedly, approximately 19% of respondents felt that the preparation requirements of the auditors had not been provided sufficiently prior to the audit, representing a negative shift in the order of 4.5% from last year. This failure to adequately provide notice of pre-audit information places additional pressure on staff.

Cost

Cost remains a concern of respondents. In terms of the actual cost of the audit, last year only two respondents indicated that the final cost was less than the estimated cost, compared with 27 local governments experiencing a cost reduction this year. Whilst most respondents indicated last year that the actual cost was higher than the cost estimate, this year only 18 respondents indicated a higher actual cost. The comments reveal concerns focussed on the transparency of costings and the justification of costs.

Inconsistent advice from contract Auditors and OAG

This year, less than 6% of respondents felt that there was inconsistency between the advice of the Contract Auditors and that received from the OAG. This compares favourably with last year's survey result of 19.7%. One respondent noted that the consistency of advice "has improved significantly from previous years".

Asset Valuation Requirements

An outcome of WALGA's advocacy from last year's survey was the achievement of a review of the application of Fair Value principles, particularly as applied in audit related asset valuation. Several comments in the 2023 survey raised the need for simplification and clarification of the Fair Value asset valuation requirements. WALGA and LG Professionals were supported in this pursuit by the OAG itself and there appears to have been some impact with far less comments being raised regarding fair value as an issue.

Although the 2024 survey results indicate an overall improvement in a number of areas as compared with the 2023 survey, effort still needs to be maintained to continue to advance these issues of importance to the sector.

Representatives from WALGA, LG Professionals and the OAG met on Tuesday, 28 May to discuss the outcomes of the survey and consider areas for improvement in the audit process. Communications and advocacy efforts on behalf of the sector are ongoing, and there are plans to conduct the survey again next year to continue to measure improvement and gather sector feedback.

ADVOCACY POSITION

It is recommended that the current Advocacy Position be amended to remove point 7, in recognition of the advocacy achievement regarding the Fair Value principles review. Otherwise, the current Position remains relevant and details key areas for improvement in the audit process that WALGA will continue to raise with the OAG.

SUMMARY

The two main focus areas are:

1. Audit costs, in terms of total cost and also the transparency of those costs.
2. The work impost on Local Government staff. Whilst timing and workflow appear better understood, an issue remains about the nature of additional work that might be required in any audit situation. Even in understanding what is required and when it is required, a Local Government must be able to recruit and retain the human resources and expertise necessary to fulfill these responsibilities in order to successfully support the conduct of the audit and the accounting function in general.

RECOMMENDATION

That the GVROC:

1. **Note the WALGA Audit Experience Survey Results Summary as presented; and**
2. **Endorse WALGA's position to amend Advocacy Position 2.2.2 Local Government Audit Process to remove point 7 as it has been achieved.**

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 2024-25 State and Federal Budget Update

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on the 2024-25 State and Federal Budgets.

IN BRIEF:

- The 2024-25 State Budget was handed down on Thursday, 9 May 2024.
- The Government used the Budget to set out its priorities for the upcoming election, with a focus on addressing the high cost of living, new industry development and economic diversification.
- Limited funding was provided for initiatives in WALGA's State Budget Submission, however a number of these may be considered for funding during the election campaign.
- The 2024-25 Federal Budget, handed down on Tuesday, 14 May 2024 also focussed on providing cost of living relief and investing in new industry development.
- While the Federal Budget retained the Government's commitment to a number of key funding programs for the Sector it missed the opportunity to invest in other priorities identified in WALGA's Federal Budget Submission.

ATTACHMENT:

- [WALGA State Budget 2024-25 Highlights](#)
- [WALGA Federal Budget 2024-25 Highlights](#)
- [WALGA State Budget Submission 2024-25](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

COMMENT:

State Budget

The 2024-25 State Budget focussed on cost of living relief, housing supply, investment in health and education, METRONET, economic diversification and the energy transition.

The Treasurer announced a \$3.2 billion net operating surplus for 2023-24 with further surpluses forecast across the forward estimates. The surplus was driven by the strong performance of the resources sector, although this was offset by cost increases in the infrastructure program.

It was disappointing that priority areas for investment identified in [WALGA's State Budget Submission](#), such as additional support for bushfire volunteers and Community Emergency Services Managers (CESMs), the renewal of aging libraries, upgrade of arts and cultural facilities and funding to address coastal erosion were neglected, despite the delivery of a multi-billion dollar surplus.

The State Budget did provide funding in line with the WALGA Budget Submission in a number of areas that will support Local Government to deliver important services to their communities:

- The Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Funding (CSRFF) was allocated an additional \$6.7 million to enable local government and community groups to deliver a further 35 sport and recreation projects across WA that had been deemed eligible for support had not been able to be funded;
- The Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy was allocated an additional \$2.9 million in 2024-25 to raise awareness and identify policy measures to enhance tree canopy and green spaces across the Perth and Peel regions. This compliments the existing \$3.6 million Urban Greening Grants program administered by WALGA;
- The Office of the Local Government Inspector will be established within the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries with funding of \$702,000 in 2024-25;
- The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) has been allocated \$32.5 million from 2023-24 to 2027-28 to meet additional demand and costs; and
- Five important regional airstrips managed by Local Governments in Carnarvon, Onslow, Albany, Kununurra and Eucla have received funding of \$21.3 million.

WALGA attended the 2024-25 State Budget lockup on Thursday, May 9 and undertook a thorough analysis of the budget papers to assess the implications for WA Local Governments. All members were provided with a [summary of key announcements and analysis](#) on Budget night.

WALGA hosted a table at the post-budget breakfast attended by key stakeholders including representatives from the Waste Authority, Shelter WA, Business News, the Chamber of Arts and Culture and ABC Radio Perth.

Federal Budget

The Federal Budget focussed on providing cost of living relief, accelerating housing construction and investing in new industry development without increasing inflationary pressures. The Treasurer announced a \$9.3 billion surplus for the 2023-24 financial year. Deficits are forecast across the forward estimates and beyond.

While the Federal Budget retained the Government's commitment to a number of key funding programs for the sector it missed the opportunity to invest in other priorities identified in [WALGA's Federal Budget Submission](#).

The Federal Government once again failed to deliver on its commitment to a fair and reasonable increase in Financial Assistance Grants for Local Governments. In 2024-25, \$3.27 billion has been provided for Financial Assistance Grants funding, with WA to receive \$399.3 million. Financial Assistance Grants as a proportion of total Federal Tax revenue increased only slightly to 0.51% in 2024-25, up from 0.49%. The Budget Papers note that the Federal Government *will continue to work with states in relation to the financial support of the Local Government sector, including advancing funding earlier than would usually occur*.

As indicated by the Government following the conclusion of the 90-Day Infrastructure Review, Roads to Recovery funding will double by 2027-28. WA Local Governments are allocated 14.6% of the national total funding. The five-year program concluding in June 2024 delivered an average of \$73.1 million per year in WA. The new program is forecast to provide \$497.1 million over the next four years. The program remains an allocation over a five-year period, allowing Local Governments some flexibility to move funding between years within the program.

Funding for the Black Spot Program has been increased modestly to \$131.6 million in 2024-25 and is forecast to increase to \$140 million in 2025-26 and \$150 million in 2027-28. The indicative allocation for WA increases from \$14.6 million in 2024-25 to \$18.4 million in 2027-28.

The Federal Government has combined the former Bridges Renewal Program and Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program into a broad-based program targeting improvements to the safety and productivity of the local road network. The allocation to WA is \$24.8 million (12.4%) of the \$200 million per year national program. This is a small increase on the funding typically attracted by WA projects under the previous programs.

As anticipated, the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program is continuing to be wound down. Final budget allocations to WA Local Governments are forecast to be \$41.5 million in 2024-25 and \$37.1 million in 2025-26, down from \$106.2 million in the year ending June 2024.

The Budget established a new Active Transport Fund, with \$100 million provided over four years from 2025-26 to support construction and upgrade of bicycle and walking infrastructure.

\$50 million over two years has been allocated to a new Regional Roads Australia Mobile Program aimed at improving mobile telecommunications on major roads. This may be of significant benefit given the poor levels of coverage on key arterial roads in WA.

WALGA provided members with an [overview and analysis of the Federal Budget](#) on Budget night. WALGA attended a Post Budget Breakfast with Senator Dean Smith, hosted by the Chamber of Minerals and Energy to discuss the state of the economy and its impact on the WA Local Government sector.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on the 2024-25 State and Federal Budgets.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton*

Seconded: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas*

Carried

8.2 Submission to the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA Priority Area Discussion Papers

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the submission to the Commissioner for Children and Young People Priority Area Discussion Papers.

IN BRIEF:

- The Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People requested that WALGA provide a submission to the Commissioner's policy area discussion papers.
- WALGA's submission aligns to Advocacy Position 3.6 Children and Young People and 3.10.2 Child Safeguarding. It provides a high-level overview of the interaction of Local Government with the identified priority areas, noting that the issues raised are predominantly within the remit of State Government or service delivery specific.
- The People and Place Policy Team noted the submission at its 29 April 2024 meeting.

ATTACHMENT

- [WALGA Letter to CCYP – comments on Discussion Papers](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The submission aligns to the following [WALGA Advocacy Positions](#):

3.6 Children and Young People:

The Local Government sector supports the development and well-being of children and young people through strategic partnerships and a combination of services and facility provision. The Association advocates that the State and Commonwealth should continue to invest in the well-being of young West Australians.

July 2022

3.10.2 Child Safeguarding

1. *Local Government supports:*
 - a. *the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017, in particular Recommendation 6.12, which can be achieved by Local Government implementing and embedding child safeguarding across its functions with support from Governments at the national, state and territory levels; and*
 - b. *the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Humans Rights Commission).*
2. *The State Government, through an Independent Oversight Body, should provide financial, resourcing and capacity building support to Local Governments to implement and embed child safeguarding across its functions, through the provision of:*
 - a. *supporting materials such as template policies, procedures and guidelines;*
 - b. *consistent key messaging and resources to promote and share in venues and facilities and online;*
 - c. *examples of best practice, including case studies;*
 - d. *self-assessment tools to assist Local Government;*
 - e. *ongoing training and skills development for Local Government staff, including online training options;*
 - f. *funding for the delivery of the child safeguarding function within smaller, less well resourced (Band 3 and Band 4) Local Governments; and*
 - g. *expert officers within each region to provide support and guidance to Local Government on child safeguarding.*
3. *The Local Government sector supports Local Government participation in the State's National Redress Scheme, with full financial coverage by the State.*

May 2023

BACKGROUND

In early 2024 the Commissioner for Children and Young People released [four discussion papers](#) on the Commissioner’s priority areas:

- youth justice,
- health and mental health,
- education, and
- child protection.

The discussion papers were predominantly focused on services within the remit of State Government or service delivery specific such as youth detention and out of home care.

COMMENT

The WALGA submission outlines the role Local Government plays in the wider context of local place-based services, facilities and service networks for children and young people, and the ongoing need for adequate funding and support, particularly for regional and remote communities.

The submission also provides examples of Local Government initiatives in the children and young people space as they relate to the priority areas, states the WALGA advocacy position on child safeguarding and the WALGA State Budget Submission ask to establish an Independent Child Safeguarding Body.

An extension to the due date for submissions to enable State Council consideration was declined. The content of the submission, falls within the remit of existing Advocacy positions and is not considered controversial or new.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA submission to the Commissioner for Children and Young People Priority Area Discussion Papers.

RESOLUTION:

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

Carried

8.3 Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the submission on the Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy.

IN BRIEF:

- The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) is seeking feedback to inform the State Government's development of an Urban Greening Strategy for the Perth and Peel Regions, to be finalised by December 2024.
- Local Government is a key stakeholder in the development of the Strategy.
- WALGA's submission aligns with WALGA's Urban Forest Advocacy Position, including the need for:
 - a lead State Government agency to be responsible for delivery of the strategy, and coordination across government,
 - the Strategy to be statewide,
 - a 30% canopy by 2040 target to be set for the Perth and Peel Region,
 - effective State level policy and regulation to protect trees on private land and retain more native vegetation as part of the development process, and
 - an expanded and sustained Urban Greening Grant program.

ATTACHMENT

- [Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy – Further Information](#)
- [WALGA submission on the Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's submission aligns with Advocacy Position **4.6 Urban Forest**:

To promote the growth of Western Australia's urban forest the State Government should:

1. *Identify a lead agency with responsibility for setting the strategic direction and oversight of urban forest initiatives.*
2. *Provide recurrent funding for a comprehensive and accessible Urban Greening Grant program to support Local Government investment in public realm planting, focusing on high urban heat areas and enhancing biodiversity outcomes.*
3. *In consultation with Local Government:*
 - a. *Develop a state-wide Urban Forest Strategy, based on the overarching principles of a resilient, connected, expanded and equitable urban forest including:*
 - i. *a minimum tree canopy target of 30% by 2040 for the Perth and Peel regions,*
 - ii. *robust and contemporary data to inform decision making,*
 - iii. *funding mechanisms to support growth in urban canopy.*
 - b. *Develop contemporary legislative and policy mechanisms to enable the protection and growth of urban forest, including:*
 - i. *an effective and efficient regulatory mechanism that allows Local Government to consider the removal or alteration of a significant tree as a form of development,*
 - ii. *incentivising the provision and retention of trees on private property within the state planning framework,*
 - iii. *prioritisation of trees and vegetation as a key structural element in the design of new neighbourhoods to facilitate climate resilient and liveable communities,*
 - iv. *consideration of public realm design to maximise opportunities for tree retention and new planting consistent with any tree canopy targets.*
4. *Work with Local Government and other stakeholders to increase community awareness and promote behaviour change in relation to urban forest growth and retention to support State and Local Government targets and action.*

BACKGROUND

On 9 February 2024, the State Government announced the development of the [Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy](#) (the Strategy). The Strategy aims to "address the impacts of climate change through planning for green neighbourhoods and providing more tree canopy and green spaces in local communities". The Strategy is intended to provide strategic leadership, align objectives and coordinate the delivery of greening initiatives across State Government, Local Government and non-government organisations.

The preparation of the Strategy is being led by the Western Australian Planning Commission, with the support of the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). The Strategy is being delivered under a whole of government approach, with oversight from departments responsible for infrastructure, land use planning and biodiversity.

Minister Carey and Minister Whitby's joint media statement announcing the development of the Strategy noted that 'the State Government will work closely with the WAPC, Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), and other stakeholders to build on the many successful urban greening projects already underway and to explore further planning incentives regarding tree retention'.

The Strategy is being developed in two stages, with Stage 1 undertaking scoping and early engagement (February–June) and Stage 2 developing the details of the strategy in conjunction with key stakeholders (June onwards). It is intended that the Strategy will be provided to the WAPC for endorsement in October and finalised by the end of 2024.

Key elements identified by the State Government that will be addressed in the Strategy include:

- tree canopy measurements and reporting,
- urban heat mitigation,
- green linkages,
- canopy enhancement on State Government managed land,
- urban greening grant program, and
- community education and awareness.

The Government has indicated that the Strategy will focus on an incentive-based approach, rather than a punitive approach.

COMMENT

Trees and other vegetation in urban areas provide significant social, economic, and environmental benefits to the community. The retention and growth of a healthy, resilient and species diverse urban forest is a shared responsibility across State and Local Governments, landholders, industry, businesses and the community.

Loss of tree canopy cover is a key issue for Local Governments. In most urban areas across WA there has been a decline in canopy cover, with 41% of Local Governments experiencing a significant loss of canopy. Perth has 16% canopy cover, the lowest of all capital cities in Australia.

The development of a whole of government, statewide Urban Greening Strategy is a key WALGA advocacy priority and is essential to provide the strategic direction and oversight necessary to address the ongoing decline of tree canopy and vegetative cover.

WALGA's submission outlines key priorities and recommendations for the Strategy, including the need for:

- a lead State Government agency to be responsible for delivery of the strategy, and coordination across government,
- the Strategy to be statewide,
- a 30% canopy by 2040 target to be set for the Perth and Peel Region,
- effective State level policy and regulation to protect significant trees on private land and retain more native vegetation as part of the development process, and
- an expanded and sustained Urban Greening Grant Program.

Due to the short timeframe for the development of the Strategy, no commitment has yet been given to a formal advertising period of the draft strategy. Though its involvement in Stage 2 of the Strategy's development WALGA will advocate strongly for the inclusion of the Sector's priorities and for the Sector to have the opportunity to comment on the draft Strategy prior to final consideration by Government.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA submission on the Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy and advise the State Council of its disappointment that the State Government has not expanded this into regional areas, including funding projects in the regions.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas*

Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

Carried

8.4 Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer Update

WALGA Recommendation

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

IN BRIEF:

- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is leading the national response to eradicate Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB), with tree removal the only effective treatment.
- More than 3,000 mature trees have been removed so far, many of which are in the most iconic and important areas of Perth, including Kings Park, Rottnest Island, Perth Zoo, Hyde Park and around Lake Claremont.
- WALGA has intensified its PSHB advocacy in recent months, including representations to the Premier and Environment Minister with our concerns regarding the adequacy of the response to date, the need for greater urgency and support from the State Government, and to commence recovery immediately, including funding for replanting and research into alternative treatment methods.

ATTACHMENTS

- [Letter to the Premier](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

State Council considered the PSHB as an emerging issue at its 6 March 2024 and noted:

1. The significant threat PSHB represents to growth and retention of urban forests.
2. WALGA and Local Government's engagement in the PSHB biosecurity response.
3. The importance of shared surveillance by government, industry and community to assist with eradication efforts.
4. The need for funding for trees lost due to PSHB and ameliorate the long-term urban canopy impact.

Relevant WALGA [Advocacy Positions](#):

4.5 Urban Forest

To promote the growth of Western Australia's urban forest the State Government should:

1. *Identify a lead agency with responsibility for setting the strategic direction and oversight of urban forest initiatives.*
2. *Provide recurrent funding for a comprehensive and accessible Urban Greening Grant program to support Local Government investment in public realm planting, focusing on high urban heat areas and enhancing biodiversity outcomes.*
3. *In consultation with Local Government:*
 - a. *Develop a state-wide Urban Forest Strategy, based on the overarching principles of a resilient, connected, expanded and equitable urban forest including:*
 - i. *a minimum tree canopy target of 30% by 2040 for the Perth and Peel regions,*
 - ii. *robust and contemporary data to inform decision making,*
 - iii. *funding mechanisms to support growth in urban canopy.*
 - b. *Develop contemporary legislative and policy mechanisms to enable the protection and growth of urban forest, including:*
 - i. *an effective and efficient regulatory mechanism that allows Local Government to consider the removal or alteration of a significant tree as a form of development,*
 - ii. *incentivising the provision and retention of trees on private property within the state planning framework,*
 - iii. *prioritisation of trees and vegetation as a key structural element in the design of new neighbourhoods to facilitate climate resilient and liveable communities,*
 - iv. *consideration of public realm design to maximise opportunities for tree retention and new planting consistent with any tree canopy targets.*
4. *Work with Local Government and other stakeholders to increase community awareness and promote behaviour change in relation to urban forest growth and retention to support State and Local Government targets and action.*

4.4 Post Border Biosecurity

Western Australia's economy, environment and the community are facing increasing challenges posed by already established and new pests, weeds and diseases.

Local Government has a significant role in biosecurity management, as land managers and regulators, and therefore has an interest in ensuring that Western Australia's biosecurity system, including control of declared pests, is effective and appropriately resourced.

WALGA considers significant changes to the operation of the State's biosecurity system, including the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007, are required to ensure these risks can be managed now and into the future.

To be effective the Western Australian biosecurity system must:

- 1. Take a transparent approach to the notion of 'shared responsibility' by ensuring that:
 - a) The respective roles and responsibilities of Commonwealth, State and Local Government, industry, landholders, community groups and individuals are agreed and clearly articulated; and*
 - b) There is improved pest management on State Government managed land and a formalised structure for State Government agencies with responsibilities for biosecurity management to work together and coordinate their activities.**
- 2. Be underpinned by a strategic framework, developed in collaboration with stakeholders, that:
 - a) Establishes priorities for biosecurity threats in geographically defined regions, sets measurable targets and guides investment in biosecurity activities; and*
 - b) Is regularly evaluated and reported on.**
- 3. Have a greater focus on environmental biosecurity, through the increased recognition and management of pest species that have significant ecological impacts.*
- 4. Be adequately, sustainably and equitably funded:
 - a) The appropriateness and effectiveness of the Declared Pest Rate (DPR) and Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG) model as key mechanisms for the management of widespread and established declared pests should be reviewed and alternate mechanisms considered;*
 - b) Increased and more equitable distribution of funding for every step in the biosecurity continuum and adequate resourcing for all stakeholders, including Local Government; and*
 - c) The provision of funding for declared pest management in metropolitan areas.**
- 5. Ensure that the criteria and process for listing of declared pests is evidence-based, timely and transparent.*
- 6. Have an increased emphasis on compliance through education and enforcement activity, to ensure land managers are aware of their legislative responsibilities and are supported to implement biosecurity actions.*
- 7. Facilitate the use of new technologies, strategic monitoring, and the establishment of data management systems to inform biosecurity investment decisions and support adaptive management.*
- 8. Improve the community's understanding, awareness and action in relation to biosecurity to assist with threat surveillance and timely response to incursions.*

BACKGROUND

PSHB is a small, wood-boring beetle native to Southeast Asia that was detected in East Fremantle in September 2021. PSHB has a symbiotic relationship with a fungus, farming it inside the tree as a food source for the beetle and its larvae. In susceptible trees, the fungus kills vascular tissue causing dieback and tree death. Trees infested by PSHB can die within two years and become safety hazards and a source of infestation of neighbouring trees. More than 130 tree species are on the WA PSHB host list, including more than 30 Australian natives.

DPIRD is leading the 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 response plan is currently under review to determine if PSHB eradication is still possible, with a decision expected by the end of June 2024.

The PSHB Quarantine Area covers all or part of 25 Local Governments (see Attachment C). As of May 2024, 1.75 million host trees have been inspected at over 60,000 premises. PSHB has been detected in over 88 suburbs across Perth, with 3,008 infested trees removed so far, and many more identified for removal. A large number of these are located in the most iconic and important areas of Perth, including Kings Park, Rottnest Island, Perth Zoo, Hyde Park and around Lake Claremont.

The City of Canning has had more than 100 trees either removed or test positive for PSHB so far and has identified approximately 18,000 trees as reproductive host species at risk of infestation, representing 30% of its total tree assets. The City of Perth has had 30 trees removed/due to be removed with another 70 with obvious or suspected infestation. The City has identified 5,683 reproductive host trees, representing 35% of its total tree assets and a further 24% of trees that are non-reproductive hosts. In the City of Vincent at least 170 infested trees will need be removed from Hyde Park, representing approximately 27% of the Park's trees.

COMMENT

WALGA has intensified its PSHB advocacy in recent months. The WALGA President has written to the Premier (attached) outlining the Sector's concerns and has sought a meeting with him as a matter of urgency. WALGA has also met with the Minister for Environment, the office of the Minister for Planning, the Director General of DPIRD and at the time of writing has also sought a meeting with the Minister for Agriculture. WALGA will continue high-level advocacy activities as a matter of urgency.

WALGA hosted a Local Government CEO Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB) Roundtable with DPIRD on 16 May 2024 attended by approximately 20 Local Governments from within and adjacent to the Quarantine Zone. WALGA left the meeting with a very clear message from the sector around the scale and urgency of this issue, particularly around:

1. The adequacy of the response to date,
2. The need for greater urgency and support from the State Government, noting that if eradication of PSHB is not possible it will fall to Local Government and landowners to deal with PSHB tree removal on their land, and
3. The need to also turn our attention to recovery immediately, including funding for replanting and research into alternative PSHB treatment methods.

Following the meeting, WALGA has established a PSHB CEO Group to complement the existing Local Government office group.

WALGA is also continuing to support an officer level PSHB working group and provide regular updates to the wider Local Government Urban Forest Working Group. WALGA also attends DPIRD's PSHB Incident Response Group meetings, to raise Local Government concerns around the effectiveness and efficacy of the response directly with DPIRD.

GVROC COMMENTS:

The GVROC is aware of concerns regarding the responsiveness and timeliness of addressing this emergency issue, with issues around how long it can take for a DPIRD officer to investigate an issue and then also having to obtain Aboriginal Heritage approvals before removal of the trees can occur. This can push timelines out to 3-4 months to remove a tree, when your trying to address the spread of pest as an emergency measure wis not efficient.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA update on the Polyphagous shot-hole borer emergency and WALGA advocacy and request consideration of the GVROC comments listed above.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas*

Seconded: *Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie*

Carried

8.5 Flying Minute: Submission on Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the update on WALGA's submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) to the State Emergency Management Committee as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

IN BRIEF:

- The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is developing an Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) to embed climate change adaptation into the WA emergency management sector.
- WALGA was engaged by the SEMC to consult with the WA Local Government sector on the content, questions and actions presented in an EM-SAP Discussion Paper.
- 32 Local Governments participated in WALGA's EM-SAP consultation activities, and a consultation summary report was submitted to the SEMC as preliminary findings.
- WALGA prepared a formal submission on the EM-SAP to the SEMC. The submission supports the WA EM-SAP initiative as an important milestone in strengthening the consideration of climate change in emergency decision-making, however, provides 25 recommendations to inform the development of the final EM-SAP to ensure it is fit for purpose for Local Governments.
- WALGA's submission on the EM-SAP was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 18 April 2024 and submitted to the SEMC on 24 April.

ATTACHMENT

- [Submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan \(EM-SAP\)](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The EM-SAP submission is aligned to [WALGA Advocacy Positions](#) as follows:

8.1 Emergency Management Principles

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

8.2 State Emergency Management Framework

Local Governments are supported to undertake their emergency management responsibilities by a simple and streamlined State Emergency Management Framework with the primary objectives of:

1. *Protecting people, the economy, and the natural environment from disasters;*
2. *Supporting communities in preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies;*
3. *Clearly outlining roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for Local Government and other emergency management stakeholders;*
4. *Scalability and adaptability that supports Local Governments of varied capacity and capability; and*
5. *Supporting agency interoperability through common systems and approaches to key activities including data management, communications, and hazard management.*

8.11 Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA)

1. *The State Government should fund the implementation of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).*
2. *A reformed LEMA system should:*
 - a. *Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of Local Governments in emergency management;*

- b. *Simplify the reporting processes and reduce the administrative burden of maintaining compliance;*
- c. *Provide a suite of scalable tools and guidance materials that are accessible through an online knowledge hub;*
- d. *Build the emergency management capacity and capability of Local Governments through the provision of targeted training, exercising support, human resources and sustainable funding;*
- e. *Assist Local Governments to continue to deliver their core business activities and provide public information during an emergency event;*
- f. *Improve the connectivity of Local Governments' various risk management and hazard planning processes through an integrated approach; and*
- g. *Enable resource sharing and collaboration across the Local Government sector.*

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.*

5.4.3 Betterment (resilience)

The Local Government sector supports increased funding for the replacement or restoration of damaged assets to a more resilient standard following an event.

5.4.4 Planning for risk management and recovery plans

The Local Government sector supports access to additional expertise to assist with assessing and planning/designing for recovery projects and designated funding to Local Government for the development of emergency risk management plans and recovery plans.

BACKGROUND

The SEMC has identified climate change as a strategic priority for the Western Australian emergency management sector. In October 2022, the SEMC Climate Change Subcommittee (CCSC) was established, with WALGA CEO Nick Sloan appointed as the SEMC sponsor and Nicole Matthews as the Deputy Chair.

The SEMC CCSC is guiding the development of the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) to embed climate change adaptation into the WA emergency management sector. The EM-SAP is one of seven sector-based adaptation plans required under the *Climate Change Bill 2023*¹ to help implement [Western Australian Climate Adaptation Strategy](#).

The SEMC released an [EM-SAP Discussion Paper](#) in December 2023, to provide the WA emergency management sector an opportunity to input into the development of the EM-SAP.

WALGA was engaged by the SEMC to consult with the WA Local Government sector to obtain feedback on the content, questions and actions presented in the EM-SAP Discussion Paper. Consultation was undertaken during February and March 2024. The EM-SAP Consultation Report (Appendix 1 of the Submission) summarises the feedback provided by representatives from 32 Local Governments who participated in WALGA's EM-SAP consultation activities. The report was submitted to the SEMC Business Unit on 22 March 2024 as preliminary findings and did not include WALGA recommendations or constitute a formal WALGA submission.

¹ See [Climate change legislation | Western Australian Government \(www.wa.gov.au\)](#)

Submissions on the Discussion Paper were due on 29 March 2024. WALGA sought and were granted, an extension until 24 April 2024 to enable the submission to be considered by State Council. WALGA's submission on the EM-SAP was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 18 April 2024 and submitted to the SEMC on 24 April.

WALGA has been advised that it is likely that a draft EM-SAP will be released for further consultation.

COMMENT

The WALGA submission acknowledges the EM-SAP as an important milestone for the State Government in acting on climate change and supports the move towards a risk-informed and resilience-based approach to emergency management.

The submission supports many of the actions proposed in the EM-SAP Discussion Paper, however, identifies several issues that need to be addressed and improvement opportunities to inform the development of the final EM-SAP. In particular, the submission highlights that more clarity is required regarding what constitutes an emergency management adaptation activity, how the EM-SAP will be resourced and implemented, and how the delivery of the 7 Sector Adaptation Plans will be coordinated to avoid planning and reporting duplication and inefficiencies.

In summary, the submission affirms that Local Governments require substantial support, guidance, data and tools provided by the State Government to help them better understand their local climate risks and inform their emergency management and adaptation planning. Importantly, the submission stresses that WA Local Governments do not have the capacity to lead any of the proposed sector actions and that the State Government should lead all the actions included in the final EM-SAP. Furthermore, incorporating climate change considerations in LEMA would require a substantial level of guidance and resourcing for Local Governments and Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) as they currently function, are not the appropriate mechanism to incorporate climate change adaptation into emergency management arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the update on WALGA's submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) to the State Emergency Management Committee as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION:

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

Carried

8.6 Flying Minute: State Wage Case Submission

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the WALGA 2024 State Wage Case submission to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

IN BRIEF:

- Annually the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) in Court Session issues a decision setting the WA minimum wage.
- WALGA had an opportunity to file a submission with the WAIRC containing Local Government specific information and economic data for the WAIRC to consider when making its decision.
- The provision of a submission is important because Local Governments are now the second largest employer in the State industrial relations system (after the State Government) and the decision issued may impact on Local Government employee wages.
- The submission outlines WALGA support for:
 - Wage increases that balance the need for fair wages with the requirement for Local Governments to carefully manage their budgets in the interest of their communities.
 - Increases in line with wage fixing principles.
- The Governance Policy Team approved the recommendation that the submission be provided to State Council for endorsement.
- State Council endorsed the submission via Flying Minute on 9 May 2024 and the submission was provided to the WAIRC on 14 May 2024.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute: Submission for 2024 State Wage Case](#)
- [Written Submissions of parties](#)
- [WALGA Submission in Reply](#)
- [Annual Wage Review 2023-24](#)

COMMENT

WALGA's submission provides an opportunity for the Local Government sector to influence minimum wage and award pay rates, which in turn impacts on wages paid to Local Government employees. The organisations which traditionally make State Wage Case submissions provide extensive economic data for WA (in particular the State Government). The provision of Local Government specific background and economic data will assist the WAIRC to consider the Local Government sector in its decision.

WALGA's submission supports wage increases that balance the need for fair wages with the requirement for Local Governments to carefully manage their budgets in the interest of their communities, including increases in line with wage fixing principles.

WALGA's submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 9 May 2024 and the submission was provided to the WAIRC on 14 May 2024.

On 21 May 2024 WALGA filed further reply submission to address issues raised by the Minister for Industrial Relations and Unions WA about Local Governments and the sector.

The Commission in Court Session of the WAIRC will sit again on Thursday, 6 June 2024 to hear submissions on the Fair Work Commission's decision on its Annual Wage Review (which is due to be handed down on Monday, 3 June 2024 at 10.30 am (AEST)) with a requirement to hand down a decision before 1 July 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA 2024 State Wage Case submission to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

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

Carried

8.7 Flying Minute: Submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note the submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

IN BRIEF:

- The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport (The Committee) is conducting an inquiry into local government sustainability, with submissions due by 31 May 2024.
- WALGA's submission addresses current and future Local Government funding and expenditure challenges, as well as current labour market shortages with a focus on regional issues.
- The submission was informed by WALGA's advocacy positions, 2024-25 State and Federal Budget submissions and relevant data and statistics from a range of sources.
- The endorsed submission was provided to the sector and Local Governments were encouraged to prepare their own submission to the inquiry.
- At its meeting of 1 May 2024, State Council resolved the following:
 1. *That the submission on the inquiry into Local Government Sustainability to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport be endorsed in principle.*
 2. *A working party of State Councillors to be established by the President to work with the WALGA Economist to refine the submission and submit to State Council as a Flying Minute, for approval by the submission deadline.*
- A working party was created and met on 2 May 2025. The working party made minor changes to the submission. The submission as amended was provided to State Council by Flying Agenda for endorsement.
- State Council endorsed the submission via Flying Minute on 8 May 2024 and the submission was provided to the Committee on 31 May 2024.
- WALGA will appear before the Committee on 7 June 2024.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute: WALGA's Submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This Inquiry has a broad scope that relates to many of WALGA's established advocacy positions in the areas of revenue raising, infrastructure and services provision, and workforce challenges.

BACKGROUND

On the 21 March 2024, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport (The Committee) announced an inquiry into Local Government sustainability following a referral from the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Catherine King MP.

The Terms of Reference identified the following areas of focus:

- The financial sustainability and funding of local government,
- The changing infrastructure and service delivery obligations of local government,
- Any structural impediments to security for local government workers and infrastructure and service delivery,
- Trends in the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce in the local government sector, including impacts of labour hire practices,
- The role of the Australian Government in addressing issues raised in relation to the above, and
- Other relevant issues.

The inquiry will specifically seek to understand service infrastructure requirements, such as maintaining a cost effect road infrastructure, in regional, rural, and remote locations and workforce challenges.

Following representations from WALGA and other associations, the Committee extended the deadline for submissions to 31 May 2024.

The submissions will inform the Committee's further engagement. It is expected that the Inquiry will take 12 months, extending beyond the next Federal election.

COMMENT

Local Governments provide a range of services and infrastructure that affect the daily lives of all people and businesses and is responsible for important regulations to protect the community.

The inquiry provides an essential opportunity to highlight current and future issues that affect Local Government sustainability and provide commentary on how these could be addressed.

WALGA's submission highlights the limited revenue base of Local Governments and increasing cost pressures particularly in relation to on the provision of local services, infrastructure, and employee costs.

Local Government revenue is primarily derived from three rates, fees and charges and grants. The draft submission outlines the range of constraints on raising revenue and vast revenue ranges between Local Governments with smaller, regional Local Governments having a lower capacity to raise rates revenue or charge fees, often relying on grant funded money.

The submission emphasises that the sector is facing increasing cost pressures making it difficult to provide local infrastructure, facilities and services in a timely and cost-efficient manner that meet community expectations.

The submission also acknowledges the sector's staffing challenges, including attracting skilled workers especially in regional areas, particularly given the state's extremely tight labour market conditions.

The submission, which has been informed by WALGA's advocacy positions, 2024-25 State and Federal Budget submissions, and relevant data and statistics from a range of sources, proposes a range of solutions to the outlined challenges.

Following feedback from State Councillors during the Flying Agenda process, minor changes were made to the draft submission as follows:

- In Part 2 Funding Challenges, at the conclusion of the Financial Assistance Grants section, the following sentence has been included and emphasised: *WALGA's position is that more funding programs with principles like the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program should be developed.*

WALGA's submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute on 8 May 2024.

WALGA's submission has been provided to the sector and Local Governments have been strongly encouraged to provide a submission on the inquiry.

The submission was provided to the Committee on 31 May 2024.

WALGA will appear before the Committee on 7 June 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note the WALGA submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Patrick Hill, Shire of Laverton

Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

8.8 Flying Minute: Standardised Meeting Procedures Submission

WALGA Recommendation

That State Council note WALGA's submission on Standardised Meeting Procedures to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

IN BRIEF:

- An element of the State Government's Local Government Reform Proposals is to introduce standardised meeting procedures as regulations, and thereby discontinue the making of local laws for this purpose.
- Sector consultation on the Reform Proposals indicated broad support for standardised meeting procedures.
- The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) released a Consultation Paper in February 2024, seeking sector feedback on the proposed standardised meeting procedures with consultation closing on 29 May 2024.
- WALGA released a companion Discussion Paper raising matters for consideration to assist Local Governments with their assessment of the proposed meeting procedures and to assist WALGA develop a sector position on the proposals.
- Feedback on the Discussion Paper closed end of April to facilitate developing a Flying Minute to State Council by the consultation closing date of 29 May 2024.
- State Council endorsed the submission via Flying Minute on 27 May 2024.
- On 29 May 2024, the DLGSC extended the deadline to 7 June 2024.
- The submission was provided to DLGSC on 7 June 2024.

ATTACHMENT

- [Flying Minute: Standardised Meeting Procedures Submission](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

BACKGROUND

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries commenced consultation on the standardising of council and committee meeting procedures by releasing a Consultation Paper in February 2024.

The Consultation Paper provides the following summary of the purpose and intent of the proposals:

The State Government is implementing a number of reforms to the Local Government Act 1995 (the Act) to improve transparency and accountability in local government in Western Australia and deliver benefits to ratepayers and residents.

Standardising council and committee procedures is part of these reforms. Establishing a consistent approach to all local government council and committee meetings will make it easier and simpler for people to participate in and observe council meetings, wherever they are held.

Establishing one standard is expected to simplify and improve training for council members and local government staff. It can also strengthen the enforcement of breaches of meeting procedures.

The consultation period closing date is 29 May 2024. In response, WALGA developed a Discussion Paper with a view to being read in conjunction with the Consultation Paper, to facilitate a considered response to the 34 questions posed by the Department.

WALGA sought feedback on the Discussion Paper by 29 April 2024 to permit a sector response to be lodged by the consultation period closing date. A total of 35 responses were received by WALGA and the responses are summarised in the submission.

COMMENT

Respondent Local Governments are generally supportive of proposals and a brief summary of alternative views and matters for consideration is provided below:

- Public Question Time: Respondents agreed there needs to be a balance between public participation at meetings and managing the business of the meeting that results in decision-making.
- Special Council Meetings: Respondents recognised the need to deal with urgent or emergency situations.
- Urgent Business: The procedures recommend adding controls to urgent business, which are generally supported. However the proposal for the CEO to report to the Department each occasion Council agrees to deal with urgent business, is not supported.
- Procedural Motions: Respondents did not support all proposals to increase the range of procedural motions and will look for reassurance that standardised meeting procedures do not permit undue interference in the conduct of a meeting.
- Meetings of Electors: There is support for the standardised meeting procedures to apply to Elector's Meetings to ensure consistency across the sector.
- Powers of Presiding Person: Respondents recognise the importance of powers provided to the presiding person to manage the meeting and the conduct of those present.
- Red Tape Reduction: An additional theme that featured in responses is the Local Government sector seeks to avoid the creation of unnecessary red tape that does not already feature in contemporary meeting procedures.

It is expected there will be further consultation on the proposed regulations once the Department has analysed feedback on its Consultation Period. WALGA will seek opportunity to comment during this development stage to ensure that future standardised meeting procedures facilitate efficient, orderly and participative council and committee meetings.

Following feedback from State Councillors during the Flying Agenda process, the following changes were made to the submission:

Question 16: Orderly Conduct of Meetings – The submission has been amended to strongly oppose the proposal that Council can vote to rescind a direction given by the presiding member that relates to maintaining order at a meeting.

Question 20: Maximum speaking time in debate – The submission was amended to recommend that both 5-minute duration and 3-minute duration of speeches in debate be considered, reflecting that both time limits are currently in practice.

Question 27: Adverse Reflection – The submission has been amended to include a comment supporting the proposal that a clear definition of adverse reflection will be included, to minimise prospect of misinterpretation.

Question 34: Any other matters – The submission has been amended to include commentary that the new regulations be drafted on the principle of supporting Local Government's general competence powers.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC note WALGA's submission on Standardised Meeting Procedures to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

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

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

Policy Teams

9.1 Environment Policy Team Report

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the matters considered by the Environment Policy Team at its meetings on 1 May and 29 May 2024.

The Environment Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

- *Environment*
- *Planning*
- *Climate change*
- *Building Regulation*
- *Natural resource management*
- *Urban Forests*

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Environment Policy Team at its meetings held on 1 May and 29 May 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Caravan and Camping Ground Regulation

Both the Great Southern Zone and South West Country Zones at their respective April 2024 Zone meetings passed resolutions calling on WALGA to adopt a sector-wide advocacy position on Caravan and Camping Group Regulation.

The Policy Team was provided with WALGA's new Advocacy Position at its meeting on 29 May 2024 and endorsed the recommendation that State Council adopt the Advocacy Position related to the Caravan and Camping Ground Regulations.

[Item 8.1](#) of the State Council Agenda relates to this matter.

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

The Policy Team discussed the following items for noting on the 1 May 2024 State Council agenda:

- Item 8.1 - Environment Policy Team Report
- Item 9.2 - Tree Retention Model Local Planning Policy
- Item 9.4 - Planning and Building Performance Monitoring Report

3. PORTFOLIO UPDATES

The Policy Team was provided with updates on the following at their 1 May 2024 meeting:

- Urban Forests,
- Planning Reform,
- Nature Positive Law reforms,
- Climate Change Policy Statement and Advocacy Position review, and
- Polyphagous shot-hole borer.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the matters considered by the Environment Policy Team as presented.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Cr Tracey Rathbone, Shire of Coolgardie

Carried

9.2 **Governance Policy Team Report**

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the matters considered by the Governance Policy Team at its meetings on 1 May and 15 May 2024.

The Governance Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

- Governance (Local Government legislation)
- Local Government Reform/Regional Service Delivery
- Local Government Revenue
- Local Government Elections
- Employee Relations/Industrial Relations
- Training

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Governance Policy Team at its meetings held on 1 May and 15 May 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

2024 Audit Experience Survey Results and Advocacy Position

WALGA, in partnership with Local Government Professionals WA, has recently conducted a survey of the Local Government sector to seek feedback on the annual audit process.

The Policy Team was provided with the Audit Experience Survey Results Summary Report and recommends that State Council adopt the recommendation to note the survey results and amend Advocacy Position 2.2.2.

[Item 8.2](#) is included in the Agenda for State Council's decision.

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

Local Government Election Analysis

The Policy Team considered a report which presented the findings of a review and analysis of five election cycles up to and including the 2023 local government, against a backdrop of legislative reforms to the Local Government electoral process in WA.

The Policy Team resolved to defer to item to a future meeting and:

- Requested WALGA seek advice from the WAEC on the expected timing for the delivery of their Local Government Elections Report.
- Expressed disappointment in the Local Government response rate to the WALGA request for information and requested re-engagement with Local Governments to improve participation.

Submission for 2024 State Wage Case

The Policy Team endorsed the Submission for the 2024 State Wage Case. This was subsequently considered by State Council as a Flying Agenda and the submission was endorsed by State Council (Agenda [Item 10.6](#) refers).

Standardised Meeting Procedures

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries released a Consultation Paper in February 2024, seeking sector feedback on the proposed standardised meeting procedures with consultation closing on 29 May 2024.

WALGA subsequently released a companion Discussion Paper.

The Policy Team was provided with a summary of feedback received on WALGA's Discussion Paper supported the development of a Flying Agenda for State Council's Consideration.

The Flying Agenda and submission with some amendments was endorsed by State Council (Agenda [Item 10.8](#) refers).

Salaries and Allowances Tribunal

At the 6 December 2023 State Council meeting, State Council endorsed the WALGA submission to the 2024 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members. The Policy Team was provided with a summary of the SAT Determination (published on 5 April 2024). The Determination comes into effect on Monday, 1 July 2024.

Overall, the Determination is in line with WALGA's submission.

The Governance Policy Team is schedule to meeting in mid June.

RECOMMENDATION

GVROC notes the Governance Policy Team report as presented.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: *Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas*

Seconded: *Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder*

Carried

9.3 Infrastructure Policy Team Report

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the matters considered by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting on 1 May 2024.

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 by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting on 1 May 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Nil

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

At its meeting on 1 May, the Infrastructure Policy Team:

1. Received a briefing from Cr James Rowe JP representing the North Metropolitan Zone regarding a motion carried by the Zone seeking an investigation into the impact of the new light vehicle emissions standard on Local Governments. The team resolved that input be sought from the WALGA environment team to understand how the impacts of this new legislation can be integrated into broader climate change related work.
2. Discussed the submissions to:
 - a. 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review; and
 - b. State Parliamentary Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications; that were to be considered by State Council.
3. Considered progress of the work with Regional Road Groups to update the multi-criteria analysis models used to prioritise investments funded by the State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement.
4. Received updates for on-going policy or advocacy activities in relation to:
5. Regulating heavy vehicle road access conditions;
6. Extended lead time for quotes from Western Power for headworks and changes to infrastructure;
7. Royalty payments for mine site materials used in road construction and maintenance;
8. Review of Main Roads WA Cross over Policy; and
9. Local Government Active Transport Working Group

The team noted that ALGA has decided to hold the National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress in Western Australia on 3 and 4 December 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

RESOLUTION:

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

Carried

9.4 People and Place Policy Team Report

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Note the matters considered by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting on 30 April 2024.
2. Determine to retire Advocacy Position 3.12.1 State Trail Bike Strategy.

The People and Place Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

- Community
- Emergency Management

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting held on 30 April 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Advocacy Position Review

The People and Place Policy Team provides recommendations regarding WALGA community and emergency management advocacy positions for State Council's decision. Advocacy Positions may be reviewed in the [WALGA Advocacy Position Manual](#).

The Policy Team recommends that State Trial Bike Strategy Advocacy Position 3.12.1 be retired. This position relates specifically to the *WA State Trail Bike Strategy 2008*, which is no longer in circulation or available on State Government platforms.

The Policy Team considered that existing Advocacy Position 3.12 Off-Road Vehicles captures the sector's desire to manage land use activities related to the use of trail bikes in line with their local context:

3.12 Off-Road Vehicles

Legislation relating to off road vehicles should be reviewed to align registration and licensing of off-road vehicles with other vehicle types are users. In addition, educational resources should be developed in consultation with users, regulators, and vendors relating to safety, regulatory compliance and other associated matters.

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

The Policy Team discussed the following items for noting on the 1 May 2024 State Council agenda:

- Item 9.1 - WALGA 2023 Emergency Management survey
- Item 9.3 - Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan implementation
- Item 9.5 - 2024 WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum

Submission to the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA Priority Area Discussion Papers (Agenda [Item 10.2](#) refers)

The Commissioner for Children and Young People WA requested that WALGA provide a submission to the Commissioner's policy area discussion papers. WALGA developed a submission aligned to relevant WALGA advocacy positions and previous submissions. The Policy Team noted the submission, and it was provided to the Commissioner on 29 April 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the report by the People and Place Policy Team as presented.

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

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 10 July 2024 meeting.

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Municipal Waste Advisory Council meeting held on 24 April 2024.

1. **MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION**

Nil

2. **MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING**

MWAC considered the following matters:

- Policy Statement Review - Extended Producer Responsibility: The Council considered a proposed update of the Extended Producer Responsibility Policy Statement. An updated Policy Statement will be provided to State Council for consideration at its September meeting.
- Development of Advocacy Position - Circular Economy: The development of a Circular Economy Advocacy Position is a priority for 2024. The Council was provided with a summary of WALGA's plan for the position and were given an opportunity to provide their input.
- Draft State Waste Strategy - Focus and Process for Submission: The Council was provided with WALGA's Submission on the Directions Paper, which informed the development of the Draft Strategy. Members supported the proposed process to develop a response to the Draft Strategy.
- Waste Levy Policy and Advocacy Position - Feedback from Zones: WALGA Zones have considered the Waste Levy Advocacy Position and Policy Statement and have provided feedback, an overview of their comments was provided to MWAC. The Policy and Advocacy Position was endorsed by State Council at the 1 May 2024 meeting.

Updates on the following items were noted:

- Policy Statement Review Update,
- Wheatbelt Waste and Environment Summit being held in Northam on 30-31 May 2024,
- DWER Non-Metropolitan Roundtable, and
- Bin Tagging Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

That GVROC note the resolutions of the 24 April 2024 Municipal Waste Advisory Council Meeting.

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

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 July 2024 Agenda Items 11.1.1 to 11.1.4.

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

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 July 2024 be received. (refer to Attachment 5)

11.2 CEO's Report

WALGA Recommendation

That the CEO's Report for July 2024 be received.

11.3 Ex Officio Reports

- The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas will provide the City of Perth Report to the meeting.
- LG Professionals WA State President, Mr Anthony Vuleta, will provide the LG Professionals report to the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

GVROC notes the President's and CEO's Reports for July 2024 and the Ex Officio reports to be presented at the meeting as received.

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

Carried

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

12.1 Complete Status Report on State Council Resolutions - To the July 2024 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 July 2024 State Council meeting and the Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Status Report.

RESOLUTION:

Moved: Cr Laurene Bonza, Shire of Dundas

Seconded: Mayor Glenn Wilson, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder

Carried

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

13.1 WALGA's efforts to become an employer organisation

WALGA Recommendation

That the Zones note the briefing on WALGA's efforts to become an employer organisation.

IN BRIEF:

- As previously detailed in an item to all Zones in April, WALGA has been considering amending the Association Constitution to enable WALGA to become a registered employer organisation under section 54 of the *Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA)* (IR Act).
- Despite advocacy efforts by WALGA since December 2022, the State Government has not agreed a pathway for WALGA to be provided with standing as an employer organisation by being named in the IR Act.
- Becoming an employer organisation would provide WALGA with more opportunity to modernise the Local Government State Awards, intervene in industrial matters concerning the Local Government sector, and generally better represent Members' views.
- Whilst the benefits of becoming an employer organisation are considerable, legal advice received by WALGA suggests that the constitutional amendments necessary for WALGA to comply with the requirements for registration are considerable and unachievable without wholesale changes to the governance structure of the Association.
- WALGA will continue to advocate to the State Government for WALGA to be named in the IR Act and given the status of an employer organisation, without needing to make constitutional amendments.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The existing [Advocacy Position](#) on WALGA's registration as an Employee Organisation is contained in position 2.8.3:

That WALGA advocate for amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA) (IR Act) for WALGA to be named in the IR Act like the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Medical Association Incorporated (AMA) at s.72B and given the status of an employer organisation, including to the Minister for Industrial Relations, the Minister for Local Government and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety.

BACKGROUND

Currently, WALGA is a registered industrial agent under the [Industrial Relations Act 1979 \(WA\)](#) (IR Act). This status allows WALGA to:

- appear as an agent for a WA Local Government or Regional Council in the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) and Industrial Magistrate's Court or Industrial Appeal Court; and
- provide advice or other services to Local Governments in relation to 'industrial matters' as defined in section 7 of the IR Act.

Since the mandate for Local Governments² to operate in the State industrial relations system from 1 January 2023, unions have commenced various Local Government State awards variation claims in the WAIRC to amend industry employment conditions.

Currently, WALGA can intervene in award matters, but is unable to represent named employers and the broader Local Government sector in its own right.

WALGA has been advocating to the State Government since late 2022 to amend the IR Act and name WALGA as an employer organisation in the Act. These advocacy efforts have been unsuccessful to date.

² with the exception of the Shires of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands

Without being named in the IR Act, WALGA would need to comply with strict governance requirements to apply to become an employer organisation. This would require significant amendments to the Association Constitution, as well as endorsement by State Council and Members.

Even if these constitutional amendments were made and an application supported by State Council and the membership, the ultimate decision as to whether or not to register WALGA as an employer organisation rests with the WAIRC.

COMMENT

As foreshadowed in an Agenda item to Zones in April, WALGA has been looking to amend the Association Constitution to enable WALGA to apply to become a registered employer organisation under the IR Act.

WALGA has recently engaged lawyers, Jackson McDonald, to provide legal advice as to what constitutional amendments must be made to ensure WALGA is best placed to make a successful application for registration.

The advice received indicates that the changes required would be substantial, costly and potentially unwieldy, involving significant changes to the current governance structure and election processes of WALGA.

In particular, the following three changes required under the IR Act are considered to be untenable with the current structure of WALGA, and would therefore prohibit the Association from making a successful application for registration:

1. Secret Postal Ballot

Section 56 of the IR Act requires that elections for the holder of each office within the organisation must be conducted by way of secret postal ballot. Due to the broad definition of "office" and "officer" in the IR Act, WALGA office holders include every State Council representative, as well as the President and Deputy President.

Whilst conducting the elections for President and Deputy President via a secret postal ballot would be achievable, a postal voting system for the election of State Council representatives by Zone Delegates across 17 Zones would be unmanageable. As well as timing issues (see below), there would be significant costs involved in conducting elections in this manner, with no benefit to Members.

To accommodate an election of State Council representatives by secret postal ballot, the election cycle of WALGA would need to be changed. Currently, the terms of State Councillors run from the day of the first Ordinary State Council meeting immediately following the biennial Local Government elections (being the first week of December), to the day before the first Ordinary State Council meeting immediately following the next Local Government elections (2 years later). To allow for sufficient time for an election by postal ballot (an unavoidably slow process), the terms for State Councillors would need to be amended to commence at the next meeting (being March the year following the Local Government elections). In the meantime, the composition of State Council would be subject to the results of the Local Government elections (which may result in vacancies, with representatives needing to leave their State Council position due to no longer being on Council).

2. Independent Returning Officer

Section 56 of the IR Act requires that the rules of an employer organisation must provide for the conduct of every election to an office within the organisation by an independent returning officer, not being the holder of any other office in, and not being an employee of, the organisation. As described above, WALGA office holders include the President, Deputy President and State Councillors.

An independent returning officer could be engaged relatively easily for the election of President and Deputy President. However, engaging independent returning officers to conduct the election of State Council representatives at all 17 Zone meetings in the weeks following the biennial Local Government elections raises significant concerns in terms of cost, administrative burden and timing.

At present, the State Council elections are conducted in mid-November, about 4-5 weeks after the Local Government elections. In the interim, Councils are required to meet and elect or appoint their Zone Delegates. This leaves very little time for an independent returning officer to carry out a formal nomination and election process.

14. FUTURE MEETINGS

The following suggested dates in 2024 have been set for the remaining GVROC meetings.

- 26 July 2024 in Kambalda (to be hosted by Shire of Coolgardie)
- 8-10 October 2024 (Date and Dinner to be confirmed aligned with WALGA AGM at Perth Convention Centre)
- 29 November 2024 in Laverton (to be hosted by Shire of Laverton)

The following are the WALGA State Council meeting dates in 2024 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:

- 5-6 September 2024 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **23 August 2024**
- 4 December 2024 WALGA State Council Meeting - GVROC meeting on **15 November 2024**

15. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:52am.