

Northern Country Zone Minutes

24 November 2025

Hosted by the Shire of
Three Springs
Red Room, Community Hall
Hall Street
Commencing at 10:00am

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES.....	4
1.1	Opening	4
1.2	Attendance	4
1.3	Apologies	5
2	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	6
3	ELECTIONS	6
3.1	Elections Of Chair And Deputy Chair Of The Northern Country Zone	6
3.2	Elections Of State Council Representatives And Deputy State Council Representatives Of The Northern Country Zone.....	7
4	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.....	8
5	DEPUTATIONS.....	8
5.1	WALGA Presentation.....	8
6	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	8
6.1	Business Arising From Previous Minutes.....	9
7	WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA	9
7.1	2025 Annual General Meeting Resolutions (State Council Agenda Item 8.1).....	9
7.2	2026 Salaries And Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry For Local Government Chief Executive Officers And Elected Members (State Council Agenda Item 8.2)	12
7.3	Tourism Advocacy Position Update (State Council Agenda Item 8.3).....	21
7.4	Waste Management Advocacy Positions (State Council Agenda Item 8.4).....	25
7.5	Electoral Material – Authorisation Statement Address Requirements (State Council Agenda Item 8.5).....	27
8	EXECUTIVE REPORTS	29
8.1	Zone President's Report.....	29
8.2	WALGA State Councillor Report.....	29
8.3	WALGA President's Report	32
8.4	Status Report.....	32
8.5	Regional Development Australia – Mid West	32
8.6	Department of Local Government Industry Regulation and Safety	32
9	ZONE BUSINESS	32
9.1	CORRESPONDENCE.....	32
9.1.1	Correspondence Out.....	32
9.1.2	Correspondence In	32
9.2	Detailed Income and Expenditure Statement and Bank Reconciliation at October 2025.....	33
9.3	2026 Meeting Location.....	33
9.4	2026 Meeting Dates.....	34
9.5	2025-26 Budget.....	34
9.6	Zone Conference.....	35
10	GENERAL BUSINESS.....	36
10.1	Call to Guests to Address the Meeting	36
10.2	Regional issues.....	37
10.3	Other General Business.....	37
11	NEXT MEETING.....	37
12	CLOSURE	37

PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

How to use the Framework:

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

Confirmation of Attendance An attendance sheet will be circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting, please register your attendance by printing your name against your Council on the attendance sheet.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Minutes of the previous meeting
2. WALGA State Council Agenda 3 December 2025
3. President's Report
4. RDA Mid West-Gascoyne Report 2025
5. October 2025 Update – Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety

1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

Executive Manager, Member Services Kirsty Martin opened the meeting at 10:02am and welcomed members and guests.

1.2 ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

1 Voting Delegates from each Member Council

Shire of Carnamah	Cr Dwayne Wooltorton, deputy delegate
Shire of Chapman Valley	President Cr Nicole Batten (voting delegate) Mr Jamie Criddle, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Coorow	President Cr Guy Sims (voting delegate) Ms Mia Maxfield, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
City of Greater Geraldton	Mayor Jerry Clune (voting delegate) Mr Ross McKim, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Irwin	Cr Isabelle Scott (voting delegate) Mr Shane Ivers, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Mingenew	President Cr Hellene McTaggart (voting delegate) Cr Naomi Obst (voting delegate)

	Mr Matt Fanning, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Morawa	President Cr Karen Chappel (Chair)
Shire of Northampton	President Cr Elizabeth (Liz) Sudlow (voting delegate) Mr Andrew Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Perenjori	President Cr Jude Sutherland (voting delegate) Mr Clinton Strugnell, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate)
Shire of Three Springs	President Cr Nadine Eva (voting delegate) Ms Krys East, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
WA Local Government Association Secretariat	Ms Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager, Member Services
	Ms Kelsey Nicholson, Executive Assistant
Invited Guests	
Mid West Development Commission	Mr Nils Hay - Chief Executive Officer
Member for Mid-West	Shane Love MLA
Regional Development Mid West Gascoyne	Mark Holdsworth, Executive Officer

Guest Speakers

1.3 APOLOGIES

Federal Member for Durack	Melissa Price MP
Member for Geraldton	Ms Kirrilee Warr MLA, Shadow Minister for Local Government; Fisheries
Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety	
Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Mr Mark Bowen, Superintendent Midwest Gascoyne Region
CBH	Kelly Todman, Manager Govt & Industry Relations

Main Roads	Ms Janet Hartley-West - Regional Director Mid West-Gascoyne Ms Louise Adamson - Acting Director Mid West-Gascoyne
Shire of Carnamah	Cr Merle Isbister Mr Stuart Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Chapman Valley	Cr Trevor Royce, deputy delegate
Shire of Coorow	Cr Giulia Censi, deputy delegate
City of Greater Geraldton	Cr Jenna Denton, deputy delegate
Shire of Irwin	Cr Andrew Gillam, deputy delegate
Shire of Mingenew	Cr Jonathan Holmes, deputy delegate
Shire of Morawa	Cr Ken Stokes, deputy delegate Mr Marty Symmons, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting delegate
Shire of Northampton	Cr Tim Hay, deputy delegate
Shire of Perenjori	Cr Daniel Bradford, deputy delegate

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We, the Northern Country Zone of WALGA, acknowledge the Yamatji people, the Traditional Custodians of this land that meet on today, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

3 ELECTIONS

Pursuant to the WALGA Constitution, the Secretariat shall assume the Chair for conducting the election of office bearers, State Council Representatives and Deputy State Council Representatives.

Guidelines for elections were distributed to Member Councils via email dated 16 October 2025.

3.1 ELECTIONS OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE NORTHERN COUNTRY ZONE

The election for the Chair and Deputy Chair shall be conducted and the term set at two years expiring in November 2027, in line with the terms of State Council representatives and in sync with Local Government Elections.

Zone Chair

The following written nomination was received for the position of Chair.

- President Cr Karen Chappel Shire of Morawa

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor. If more than one nomination is received, ballot papers will be distributed and a secret ballot conducted.

DECLARATION

That President Cr Karen Chappel is elected as Chair of the Northern Country Zone for the term of 2 years, November 2025 to November 2027.

Deputy Zone Chair

No written nominations were received for the position of Deputy Chair.

Nominations will be called from the floor. If more than one nomination is received, ballot papers will be distributed and a secret ballot will be conducted.

DECLARATION

That President Cr Elizabeth Sudlow is elected as Deputy Chair of the Northern Country Zone for the term of 2 year, November 2025 to November 2027.

3.2 ELECTIONS OF STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES AND DEPUTY STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NORTHERN COUNTRY ZONE

In accordance with sub-clause 9(3) of the WALGA Constitution, representatives and deputy representatives to the State Council shall be elected by Zones of the Metropolitan and Country constituencies for two (2) year terms, commencing from the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2025 and concluding on the day before the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2027.

For the Northern Country Zone, there is 1 (1) representative position on State Council and 1 deputy (1) deputy representative position.

State Councillor

No written nominations were received for the Position of State Councillor.

Nominations will be called from the floor.

In accordance with the guidelines endorsed by State Council, candidates will be afforded the opportunity to make a 2 minute election bid prior to the secret ballot being taken.

If more than 1 nomination is received, ballot papers will be distributed and a secret ballot will be conducted.

DECLARATION

That:

- President Cr Elizabeth (Liz) Sudlow Shire of Northampton

is elected as State Council Representative of the Northern Country Zone to the State Council for the term of 2 years, December 2025 to December 2027.

Deputy State Councillor

No written nominations were received for the Position of Deputy State Councillor.

Nominations will be called from the floor. If more than 1 nomination is received, ballot papers will be distributed and a secret ballot will be conducted.

DECLARATION

That:

- President Cr Jude Sutherland Shire of Perenjori

is elected as Deputy State Council Representative of the Northern Country Zone to the State Council for the term of 2 years, December 2025 to December 2027.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

5 DEPUTATIONS

All Deputations have a time limit of 20 minutes, which includes questions time.

5.1 WALGA PRESENTATION

Ms Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager Member Services, provided an overview of WALGA and the role of Zone Delegates.

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Northern Country Zone meeting held on **25 August 2025** have previously been circulated to Member Councils and are provided as an attachment to the Agenda. (Attachment 1)

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Nicole Batten
Seconded: President Cr Guy Sims

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Northern Country Zone held on 25 August 2025 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

6.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

7 WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA

Zone Delegates are invited to read and consider the WALGA State Council Agenda, which has been provided as an attachment with this Agenda (Attachment 2) and can be found via the link [here](#).

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

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

7.1 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.1)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 23 September.
- The meeting resolved for WALGA to act in relation to four Member Motions:
 - o Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments
 - o Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions
 - o Rating Exemption Advocacy Motion
 - o Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses
- The action proposed to be taken in relation to each of the resolutions has been summarised for State Council's consideration.

ATTACHMENT

- [WALGA 2025 Annual General Meeting Minutes](#)

BACKGROUND

The 2025 WALGA AGM was held on 23 September 2025. 220 Voting Delegates were in attendance, with 124 Local Governments represented.

Five Member Motions were considered, with four being supported by Members at the AGM, as follows.

7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments

That WALGA calls on the Western Australian Government and WA Grants Commission to:

1. *increase the total funding and then the Medical Facilities Cost Adjuster component of the Financial Assistance to Local Governments; and*
2. *recalculate distributions to those Local Governments that are providing block cash payments to attract and retain general practitioners to allow affected Council to redirect ratepayer funds to Local Government responsibilities.*

7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions

That WALGA advocate to the State Government to provide culturally appropriate short-term accommodation options and wrap-around support services that provide sustainable homelessness solutions in all Local Governments across Western Australia.

7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position

That WALGA, in addition to its current advocacy positions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 relating to rating exemptions, advocate to the WA Government for the introduction of a reimbursement model, whereby the WA Government repays Local Government the greater of:

1. *75% of the value of rates lost in applying the charitable purposes exemption; or*
2. *1% of the total revenue of the Local Government.*

7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses

That WALGA:

1. *Formally oppose any move by the Local Government Minister to introduce amendments to the Local Government Act to restrict the application of rates on Miscellaneous Licences.*
2. *Develop an advocacy position on sector consultation prior to any amendment to the Local Government Act.*
3. *Undertake a financial analysis of the cost to the Mining Industry of the rating of Miscellaneous Licences compared to the benefit to the Local Government sector.*

COMMENT

Comment on each of the 2025 AGM resolutions is below.

In considering these resolutions, State Council and the relevant Policy Teams are guided by Clause 22(7) of the [WALGA Constitution](#), as follows:

Where the State Council considers that a direction or decision from an Annual General Meeting has been made without information or a material nature or in circumstances which have materially altered and such direction or decision is not in the best interests of the Association, the State Council may decline to follow that direction or decision and, in that event, the Chief Executive Officer by notice shall advise the Ordinary Members of the decision of the State Council and the reasons for that decision.

Members will be informed of progress on the above issues through Policy Team Reports in future State Council Agendas and through the AGM Status Report in next year's AGM Agenda.

7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments

A revised Rural and Remote Healthcare Services Advocacy Position was endorsed by State Council on 5 September 2025. The AGM resolution and WALGA's ongoing advocacy align on the need for financial reimbursement for Local Government support for essential

primary health care services. WALGA's approach does not specify how reimbursement to Local Governments should be undertaken, or which Local Governments should be eligible. This approach aims to provide flexibility to achieve the same outcome, such as utilising the upcoming renewal of the National Health Reform Agreement.

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the People and Place Policy Team.

7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions

WALGA is currently reviewing the Homelessness Advocacy Position as part of a regular advocacy position review process. To inform the review, WALGA will survey Local Governments to gather information on the extent of Local Government engagement with homelessness and the extent of services, including accommodation options, available within their Local Government areas.

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the People and Place Policy Team.

7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position

It is recommended that this resolution be referred to the Governance Policy Team.

7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licenses

An Advocacy Position on Rating of Miscellaneous Licences was endorsed by State Council on 5 September 2025. WALGA will continue to advocate for a broad review on all rating exemption categories and oppose legislative amendments that seek to exempt occupied miscellaneous licence land from rating.

It is recommended that this resolution is endorsed.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. the following resolutions from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the People and Place Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
 - 7.1 Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments
 - 7.2 Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions
2. the following resolution from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the Governance Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
 - 7.3 Rating Exemption Advocacy Position
3. the following resolution from the 2025 WALGA Annual General Meeting be endorsed:
 - 7.5 Rateability of Miscellaneous Licences

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Liz Sudlow

Seconded: President Cr Nadine Eva

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

CARRIED

7.2 2026 SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TRIBUNAL REMUNERATION INQUIRY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS AND ELECTED MEMBERS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.2)

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) conduct an inquiry into Local Government Chief Executive Officer and Elected Member remuneration annually.
- In preparation for the Inquiry to be undertaken early next year, WALGA has prepared a draft submission to SAT that makes recommendations in relation to Elected Member fees and allowances, Chief Executive Officer remuneration, the Regional/Isolation Allowance and independent Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) member fees.
- The 2026 submission recommends:
 - o an increase to Elected Member fees and allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) of 3%;
 - o an increase to Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands of 3%;
 - o an increase to the Regional/Isolation Allowance payable for Local Governments that are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres, and lacking in amenities;
 - o the publication of clear guidance to the Local Government sector outlining how the Regional/Isolation Allowance is applied in terms of methodology, criteria and weightings; and
 - o an increase to the current fee range for independent committee members, including ARIC members and chairs; and
 - o a higher fee range for independent ARIC chairs, in recognition of the additional skill, knowledge and time commitment of the role.
- SAT will publish its determination for 2026-27 in April 2026.
- The Governance Policy Team considered the submission at its meeting on 29 October and recommended that it be included in the December Agenda for State Council endorsement.

ATTACHMENT

- Draft WALGA submission to the 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry – Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The current Advocacy Positions relating to this submission are [Position 2.10 Elected Member Remuneration](#), [Position 2.2.3 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees](#), [Position 2.10A Chief Executive Officer Remuneration](#), and [Position 2.10A.1 Regional/Isolation Allowance](#).

2.10 Elected Member Remuneration

The Local Government sector supports appropriate remuneration of Local Government Elected Members on the basis of:

- 1. Vibrant democracy and good governance: fees and allowances payable to Elected Members should be sufficient to ensure that a diversity of candidates from a range of backgrounds seek election to Local Government leadership positions;*
- 2. Demands of the role: as the complexity of Local Government increases, and community expectations placed upon Elected Members grow in the social media age, the remuneration paid to Elected Members for their significant time commitment must compensate them for the personal and opportunity costs of taking on significant community leadership positions;*
- 3. Skills and training: with the implementation of the State Government's universal Elected Member training policy and the increasing expectation for Elected Members to undertake training, the time that Elected Members spend on professional development should be recognised by the fees and allowances framework; and*
- 4. Economic conditions: Elected Member fees and allowances must be considered within the surrounding economic environment. The value of fees and allowances paid to Elected Members should keep pace with the increasing costs of living and rates of inflation, to ensure that the relative value of Elected Member fees and allowances does not erode over time.*

2.2.3 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees

The Local Government sector:

- 1. supports Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARIC) having a clearly defined role with an Elected Member majority;*
- 2. supports the option for smaller Local Governments to share ARIC to reduce the burden on their resources;*
- 3. does not support the requirement for the chair of the ARIC to be an independent member. The appointment of the chair should be at the discretion of the Local Government; and*
- 4. supports the payment of meeting fees or defined reimbursements to independent ARIC members. The fees payable should be set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal within a separate fee category and at a suitable level that recognises the skills and knowledge required for such a role.*

2.10A Chief Executive Officer Remuneration

The Local Government sector supports appropriate remuneration of Local Government Chief Executive Officers on the basis of:

- 1. Importance of the role: the role of the CEO within Local Government is undeniably one of importance. The efficient operations and accountability of Local Governments is dependent on the appointment of a suitably qualified CEO.*
- 2. Attraction and retention: Local Governments must compete in the broader labour market to attract and retain CEOs with the requisite qualifications and experience.*
- 3. Demands of the role: the skill, workload and time commitment required from the role of a Local Government CEO must be fairly compensated.*

2.10A.1 Regional/Isolation Allowance

The Local Government sector:

1. *values the Regional/Isolation Allowance payable to Chief Executive Officers as an important means for Local Governments, particularly those that are remote or isolated, to supplement remuneration and attract suitably qualified Chief Executive Officers; and*
2. *supports greater transparency regarding methodology of application for the Regional/Isolation Allowance.*

BACKGROUND

The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) conduct an annual Inquiry into Local Government Elected Members' fees and allowances and Chief Executive Officers' remuneration. SAT invites submissions from Local Governments and other stakeholders.

SAT are yet to invite submissions for the 2026 Inquiry, however in anticipation of the upcoming end of year closure period and noting that the next ordinary meeting of State Council will be in March, the submission has been drafted early for consideration by Zones and State Council.

Local Governments are also encouraged to make their own submission to SAT, particularly in relation to their individual circumstances including requests to be classified in a different Band.

The content and recommendations in this submission were shaped by existing advocacy positions, previous submissions and feedback from individual Members since the 2025 Determination was published earlier this year.

The 2025 SAT Determination broadly aligned with WALGA's submission on behalf of Members, including:

- 3.5% increase to CEO remuneration band ranges (plus the 0.5% additional Superannuation Guarantee);
- 3.5% increase to the fee band ranges and some allowances for Elected Members (exclusive of superannuation where relevant);
- reduction of the four band ranges for independent committee members to one band, with the range to be from \$0 to \$450; and
- for the first time, provision for reimbursement of expenses for independent committee members.

The Tribunal also made two commitments in relation to:

- conducting a comprehensive survey of Local Governments in the latter half of 2025, the results of which will assist SAT in reviewing the quantum and effectiveness of the Regional/Isolation Allowance; and
- determining the rates for the independent chair of the audit, risk and improvement committee at a future date, to coincide with the commencement of the legislative changes.

COMMENT

WALGA's submission for the 2026 Inquiry makes six recommendations:

1. That Elected Member Fees and Allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) are increased by 3%.
2. That the Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands are increased by 3%.
3. That the maximum payable Regional/Isolation Allowance be increased for Local Governments that are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres, and lacking in amenities.

4. That clear guidance be published to the Local Government sector outlining how the Regional/Isolation Allowance is applied in terms of methodology, criteria and weightings.
5. That the current fee range for independent committee members be increased to recognise the level of skill and knowledge required of independent audit, risk and improvement committee members, and to attract suitably skilled individuals to the role.
6. That a higher fee range be determined for independent chairs of audit, risk and improvement committees to recognise the additional skill, knowledge and preparation required to fulfil the role, and to attract suitably skilled individuals.

In relation to Recommendation 1: Elected Member Fees and Allowances, the submission:

- Reiterates WALGA's current advocacy position.
- Points to the current economic conditions putting pressure on households, including those of Elected Members and potential candidates, which lends itself to an increase in fees and allowances. Noting that CPI is currently at 2.1% and WPI 3.7%

In relation to Recommendation 2: Chief Executive Officer Remuneration, the submission:

- Summarises WALGA's current advocacy position in relation to the importance of the role of Chief Executive Officer, including the skill, workload and time commitment required from the role, and the difficulties of attracting and retaining suitable candidates in a competitive labour market.

In relation to Recommendations 3 and 4: Regional/Isolation Allowance, the submission:

- Underlines the importance of the Regional/Isolation Allowance for attracting and retaining quality Chief Executive Officers to some Local Governments that are particularly isolated or remote.
- Recommends both a review of, and publication of guidance about, the methodology, criteria and weightings for the Allowance to provide clarity for the sector.

In relation to Recommendations 5 and 6: Independent Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Member Fees, the submission:

- Recognises the 2025 Determination went some way to help attract, retain and adequately compensate suitable individuals to the roles of member and chair of ARICs.
- Notes that the current maximum rate of \$450 is not adequately competitive when trying to recruit members and chairs within the broader labour market and should be increased.
- Reinforces WALGA's existing position that a separate, higher fee range needs to be established for ARIC independent chairs.

On 29 October, the Governance Policy Team considered the submission and recommended that it be included in the December State Council Agenda for endorsement.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the submission to the 2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Guy Sims

Seconded: President Cr Hellene Taggart

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

CARRIED

Submission

2026 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry: Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members

December 2025

About WALGA

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) is an independent, member-based, not-for-profit organisation representing and supporting the WA Local Government sector.

Our membership includes all 139 Local Governments in the State. WALGA uses its influence, support and expertise to deliver better outcomes for WA Local Governments and their communities. We do this through effective advocacy to all levels of Government on behalf of our Members, and by the provision of expert advice, services and support to Local Governments.

WALGA's vision is to be the authoritative voice and trusted partner for Western Australian Local Government.

Contacts

Nick Sloan

Chief Executive Officer

(p) 08 9213 2025 | (e) nsloan@walga.asn.au

Kathy Robertson

Manager Association and Corporate Governance

(p) 08 9213 2036 | (e) krobertson@walga.asn.au

Summary

WALGA appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of our Members to inform the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal's Inquiry into Local Government Chief Executive Officer and Elected Member Remuneration for 2026-27.

The remuneration framework is respected and supported by the Local Government sector and provides assurance to the community that Elected Members and Chief Executive Officers are being remunerated appropriately in accordance with their skills, expertise, and contributions.

To adequately compensate the responsibilities and challenges of the role of Elected Members, and to ensure Local Governments can continue to attract quality Chief Executive Officers to the sector, WALGA recommends an increase to both Elected Member fees and allowances and Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands.

WALGA acknowledges and supports the Tribunal's decision as part of the 2025 Determination to conduct a comprehensive survey of Local Governments to provide visibility as to the remuneration provided to CEOs, the Regional/Isolation Allowances provided to CEOs and the fees and allowances provided to Elected Members. The Regional/Isolation Allowance is important for our Members, particularly those remote and isolated Local Governments, to supplement remuneration and attract suitably qualified Chief Executive Officers. To this end, WALGA continues to recommend that the Tribunal look to increase the upper limit of the Allowance and provide greater transparency to the Local Government sector regarding the methodology of application for the Allowance.

Finally, whilst the Tribunal's decision last year to collapse the band ranges for independent committee members to one band, and to provide for reimbursement for expenses for those independent members has gone some way to aid in the attraction and recruitment of independent members and chairs, an increase to the upper limit of the fees is still needed.

Elected Member Fees and Allowances

WALGA would like to reinforce both the necessary and challenging nature of the role of Elected Members in Local Government. Elected Member fees and allowances need to continue to be set at a rate which appropriately compensates the prescribed role, on the basis of:

1. **Vibrant democracy and good governance:** fees and allowances payable to Elected Members should be sufficient to ensure that a diversity of candidates from a range of backgrounds seek election to Local Government leadership positions. Further, corporate governance literature suggests that diverse leadership groups make better decisions.
2. **Demands of the role:** as the complexity of Local Government increases, and the demands placed upon Elected Members grow in the social media age, the remuneration paid to Elected Members for their significant time commitment must compensate them for the personal and opportunity costs of taking on significant community leadership positions.
3. **Skills and training:** as Elected Members continue to undertake training (including compulsory Council Member Essentials training) the time that Elected Members spend on professional development should be recognised by the fees and allowances framework.
4. **Economic conditions:** Elected Member fees and allowances must be considered within the surrounding economic environment. Elected Members are not immune from broader economic conditions that may impact their ability to support themselves and their families. The value of fees and allowances paid to Elected Members should keep pace with the increasing costs of living and rates of inflation.

WALGA welcomed the Tribunal's decision to increase Elected Member remuneration by 3.5% in the 2025 Determination. Given the current economic conditions, including existing data on CPI and WPI, a similar increase is necessary for 2026-27.

In the year to June, Australian Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased 2.1%, the lowest level since March 2021. It is expected to rise in the coming quarters as the impact of electricity credits flows through the data. More relevant is the Trimmed Mean, which fell to 2.7% in June, down from 2.9% in March and is now comfortably inside the Reserve Bank of Australia's (RBA) 2% to 3% target band. The Trimmed Mean is preferred by the RBA as it filters out extreme price changes and provides a clearer view of underlying inflation.

Services inflation, which has been stubbornly slow to drop has now fallen to 3.3%, the lowest level in three years. Goods inflation remains low at 1.1%. Looking forward, the RBA remains cautious that inflationary pressures may persist due to elevated global trade tensions and a lack of productivity growth of particular concern.

In Western Australia however, the easing of inflation has been slower as the Perth CPI (+2.7%) continues to outpace the rest of the nation (+2.1%). Both Goods (+1.9%) and Services (+3.8%) prices have eased from recent highs but remain above the national figures. The increase in housing costs has also fallen at a slower rate than elsewhere in the country with New Dwellings (+5.5%) and Rents (+7.6%) still growing above the target range.

The value of fees and allowances paid to Elected Members must reflect the broader economic conditions and should keep pace with inflationary pressures. A similar increase to Elected Member remuneration for 2026-27 would ensure that serving on Council is not financially prohibitive for a diverse group of community leaders and potential candidates.

Recommendation

- 1. That Elected Member Fees and Allowances (including maximum reimbursable expenses) are increased by 3%.**

Chief Executive Officer Remuneration Bands

The role of Chief Executive Officer within Local Government is undeniably one of importance. As well as requiring a high level of skill and expertise, the role of Chief Executive Officer often requires attendance at meetings and events outside of usual working hours. The skill, workload and time commitment required from the role must be fairly compensated to both retain existing Chief Executive Officers, as well as attract new, prospective candidates with the requisite qualifications and experience.

Local Governments looking to recruit and retain Chief Executive Officers must compete in the broader labour market, which is continuing to see growth, particularly in WA.

The Wage Price Index (WPI) in WA grew at the fastest pace in the nation, up 3.7% in the year to June, above the national figure of 3.4%. For the last three years, wages growth has sat above 3%. This is the most sustained period of wages growth since the mining boom. It is the same story when looking at private sector wages with three years of sustained wages growth. The public sector has seen more volatility in wages growth in recent years with wages initially slow to respond to the market conditions and now playing catch up as Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBAs) are renegotiated. Public sector wages in WA increased 5.4% in the year to June.

As the heat comes out of the labour market, it is expected that wages growth will continue to ease with the WA Treasury forecasting a fall from 3.5% in 2025-26 to 3.0% in 2026-27.

WALGA acknowledges the 3.5% increase (plus the 0.5% additional Superannuation Guarantee) to CEO remuneration bands in the 2025 Determination.

A similar band increase for 2026-27 is necessary to keep pace with the broader economic context and to ensure that Local Governments can attract and retain the best candidates to fill the essential role of Chief Executive Officer.

Recommendation

2. **That the Chief Executive Officer remuneration bands are increased by 3%.**

Regional/Isolation Allowance

Subject to the results of the survey conducted by the Tribunal in late 2025, WALGA encourages SAT to review and update the eligibility and quantum of the Regional/Isolation Allowance.

The availability and amount of the Allowance remain an issue of high importance for the WA Local Government sector, especially those Local Governments which are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres and lacking in amenities.

WALGA reiterates its recommendations to the 2025 Inquiry: our Members are seeking greater flexibility with the upper limit of the Allowance, and greater transparency regarding the methodology of application for the Allowance.

Recommendations

3. **That the maximum payable Regional/Isolation Allowance be increased for Local Governments that are particularly isolated, long distances from population centres, and lacking in amenities.**
4. **That clear guidance be published to the Local Government sector outlining how the Regional/Isolation Allowance is applied in terms of methodology, criteria and weightings.**

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Independent Chair

As detailed in our submission to the 2025 Inquiry, WALGA's current position in relation to remuneration for independent members and chairs of audit, risk and improvement committees (ARICs) is twofold:

1. That a new fee category for independent ARIC members be created without bands, and the fee be set at a suitable level to recognise the skills and knowledge required for such a role; and
2. That the new category provides for a fee for the independent chair position and an independent member position.

This position recognises that:

- Tranche 2 amendments to the *Local Government Act 1995* will mandate that ARICs have an independent chair, increasing the burden on Local Governments to attract and recruit suitably qualified individuals;
- The broadened role of ARICs will require independent members to possess substantial expertise in audit, risk and Local Government operations, making recruitment more challenging under current fee structures; and
- Existing fees are too low to attract and retain skilled professionals.

WALGA recognises the Tribunal's decision in the 2025 Determination to collapse the band ranges for independent committee members to one band, and to provide for reimbursement of expenses

for those independent members. This will certainly go some way towards helping to attract, retain and adequately compensate suitable individuals to these roles.

WALGA also acknowledges that the Tribunal will determine the rates for the independent ARIC chair to coincide with the legislative changes, which we anticipate will come into effect later this year.

However, in the meantime, WALGA's position continues to be that the fees for independent members and chairs must be set at a level that reflects the complexity, strategic importance, and time commitment of the role. The skills necessary of an independent member will require Local Governments to attract professionals from the fields of risk, finance, auditing and law; all fields which are in high demand. WALGA's position is that the current maximum rate of \$450 is inadequate to attract suitable individuals in a highly competitive market.

Recommendation

5. That the current fee range for independent committee members be increased to recognise the level of skill and knowledge required of independent audit, risk and improvement committee members, and to attract suitably skilled individuals to the role.
6. That a higher fee range be determined for independent chairs of audit, risk and improvement committees to recognise the additional skill, knowledge and preparation required to fulfil the role, and to attract suitably skilled individuals.

7.3 TOURISM ADVOCACY POSITION UPDATE (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.3)

By Saul Cresswell, Principal Policy Advisor Economic Development

BACKGROUND

The visitor economy is an important driver of economic development for metropolitan and regional Local Governments in Western Australia. Comprising people travelling for leisure, business events, education, and those visiting friends and relatives, the visitor economy contributed \$18.3 billion to the Western Australian economy in 2023-24. Approximately 45 per cent of this spend took place in the regions.

In 2015, WALGA undertook research and consultation on tourism, developing a *Local Government and Tourism Discussion Paper* that included recommendations. As part of the recommendations, Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism was endorsed by State Council in March 2017.

Local Governments are instrumental in maintaining the amenity of destinations, a critical factor in safeguarding tourism reputation and repeat visitation. There has been a growth in demands on Local Government resources to meet gaps in service delivery from other levels of Government or the private sector and to align with changes in community expectations (see [WALGA's submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Financial Sustainability](#)).

The WA Government's [Diversify WA](#) economic framework considers tourism and events a priority sector in the diversification of the state's economy. The *WA Visitor Economy Strategy* (WAVES) sets a vision for a \$25 billion visitor economy by 2033.

The State Government, through Tourism WA and the Regional Tourism Organisations, have developed regional tourism strategies, known as Tourism Destination Management Plans (TDMPs), to identify the challenges and opportunities across demand, supply and capability. TDMPs are the most informed articulation of a shared tourism vision undertaken to date, yet have no funding mechanism to implement them.

Tourism emerged as a key topic in WALGA's 2024 Economic Development Survey, with visitor attraction a focus area for Local Government economic development efforts. Responding to the findings, WALGA undertook a Tourism Survey in June 2025, which received 36 Local Government responses from a diversity of regions, with 92% of respondents stating that tourism had medium or high importance to their Local Government.

WALGA developed the *Role of Local Government in Tourism Discussion Paper*, which outlined the constraints and opportunities for Local Governments, and was distributed for Member and stakeholder feedback in September 2025. It also included a draft revised advocacy position. Feedback was received from 28 Local Governments, plus Tourism WA, Tourism Council WA and Regional Tourism Organisations. Local Government responses were received from each of the five tourism regions: Australia's South West, Australia's North West, Australia's Coral Coast, Australia's Golden Outback and Destination Perth.

The consultation provided unanimous support for the overarching intent of the draft advocacy position. Nearly half of respondents proposed amendments, which were considered and incorporated into the revised draft advocacy positions.

Key sector feedback during WALGA's consultation, included:

- Inadequate recognition of the pivotal role Local Government plays in providing community infrastructure and services that underpins amenity for visitors, and the need for sustainable funding mechanisms.
- Continued confusion about the roles of tourism agencies across WA and who to turn to for support.
- The prohibitive costs of accessing data relating to tourism in Local Government areas.
- Impacts of a difficult regulatory environment at all levels of government on tourism and events.
- The need for support addressing tourism literacy and the visitor economy.

The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the updated advocacy position at its meeting on 22 October 2025, with the inclusion of an additional point requesting resourcing for emergency management and medical services that face significantly increased demand during peak tourism periods.

ATTACHMENT

- [The Role of Local Government in Tourism - 2025 Research Paper](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's **current** position:

That WALGA:

1. *Continues to advocate for a Local Government tourism strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes;*
2. *In the short-medium term, advocates that the State Government:*
 - a. *Produces targeted communication and education for Local Government using existing Tourism WA data to demonstrate the value of tourism to local communities, Elected Members and Local Government officers;*
 - b. *Provides guidance for Local Government on marketing small projects including events and attractions;*
 - c. *Directs Regional Development Commissions to facilitate the coordination of tourism stakeholders to provide strategic support where required for Local Government; and*

- d. *Provides funding to Local Government for tourist infrastructure.*
- 3. *In the long term, advocates that the State Government:*
 - a. *Articulates the lead agency and defines the roles of other agencies in tourism, to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State and to enhance Local Government's understanding of tourism in WA;*
 - b. *Defines and communicates how it provides destination marketing support to Local Governments and communicates how Local Governments can most effectively direct their resources;*
 - c. *Develops a sustainable State Government tourism funding mechanism for both regional and metropolitan Local Governments which is clearly communicated to Local Governments;*
 - d. *Implements and invests in Regional Investment Blueprints and delivers through appropriate funding models such as Royalties for Regions and federal funding opportunities which are clearly communicated to Local Government;*
 - e. *Continues funding to support sustainability of visitor centres;*
 - f. *Undertakes improvements to tourism-related infrastructure and technology including mobile signals and WIFI in regional areas; and*
 - g. *Undertakes measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services.*

It is proposed that the position **be replaced** with:

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

- 1. *Fund the implementation of the WA Visitor Economy Strategy and the supporting Tourism Destination Management Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies, including for:*
 - a. *maintenance and renewal of Local Government assets and services that underpin a positive visitor experience*
 - b. *new and existing tourism infrastructure*
 - c. *improving telecommunications infrastructure*
 - d. *measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services*
 - e. *accredited Visitor Centres.*
- 2. *Ensure that tourism destinations with significant seasonal influxes of visitors have adequate medical and emergency services and reliable telecommunications.*
- 3. *Articulate a clear tourism governance framework with defined roles and responsibilities to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.*
- 4. *Adequately consult and consider Local Government when undertaking strategic tourism planning across Western Australia.*
- 5. *Provide improved access to affordable, timely and granular data that delivers LGA-level insights on visitation, spend and event impacts.*

COMMENT

Since the current advocacy position was adopted, tourism across the State has continued to evolve and change, including post pandemic visitation growth, changing tourism behaviour, and the increasing costs of doing business.

Many challenges identified in the current advocacy position persist and remain part of the new draft advocacy position. These include:

- a lack of clarity in tourism organisation roles and responsibilities
- ineffective coordination efforts
- lack of capacity building opportunities for Local Government
- and inaccessible and expensive data, often missing a localised focus.

The suggested revision to Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism aims to provide a consolidated and contemporary position on the important role Local Government provides for tourism in WA and how best to capitalise on opportunities to benefit their communities.

The proposed updates to the advocacy position seek to:

- Align State Government investment and support with the contemporary Tourism Destination Management Plans (TDMPs).
- Reiterate the need for clear tourism governance across the State, without reference to which agency should lead the work.
- Reiterate and further clarify the need for accessible data to support informed decision making.
- Emphasise the pivotal role the Local Government sector plays in supporting the visitor experience, and advocate for adequate consultation and funding to ensure this role can be sustained.

WALGA will continue to work with State Government agencies and support the Local Government sector, including sharing the updated tourism research paper which provides context around tourism and the diverse roles Local Government can play.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace Advocacy Position 3.9 Tourism with an updated position as follows:

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

- 1. Fund the implementation of the WA Visitor Economy Strategy and the supporting Tourism Destination Management Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies, including for:*
 - a. maintenance and renewal of Local Government assets and services that underpin a positive visitor experience*
 - b. new and existing tourism infrastructure*
 - c. improving telecommunications infrastructure*
 - d. measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services*
 - e. accredited Visitor Centres.*
- 2. Ensure that tourism destinations with a significant seasonal visitor influx have adequate medical and emergency services and reliable telecommunications.*
- 3. Articulate a clear tourism governance framework with defined roles and responsibilities to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.*
- 4. Adequately consult and consider Local Government when undertaking strategic tourism planning across Western Australia.*
- 5. Provide improved access to affordable, timely and granular data that delivers LGA-level insights on visitation, spend and event impacts.*

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Nicole Batten
Seconded: President Cr Liz Sudlow

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

CARRIED

7.4 WASTE MANAGEMENT ADVOCACY POSITIONS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.4)

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA has been undertaking a process of reviewing and updating Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements.
- There are three Waste Management Advocacy Positions (7.2 State Waste Strategy, 7.3 Waste Authority and 7.11 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement) which have been recently reviewed.
- It was determined that these positions are either no longer relevant or have been incorporated into other positions and it is therefore recommended they be retired.
- To ensure a clear Local Government position on all relevant waste management matters, WALGA is also undertaking a policy position gap analysis to inform the development of future Advocacy Positions.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed retiring the three Advocacy Positions at its meeting on 15 October 2025.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The item retires the existing [Advocacy Positions](#):

7.2 State Waste Strategy

Local Government requires leadership and clear direction from the State Government in relation to waste management. As such, Local Government supports the development and implementation of a comprehensive State Waste Strategy which:

- 1. Is consistent with the content, purpose and objective of existing legislation and policy at both a state and national level;*
- 2. Clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Waste Authority in regard to the development and implementation of the Strategy, as outlined in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007;*
- 3. Is reviewed, with Stakeholder input, within 2 years of implementation; and*
- 4. Includes achievable targets for all waste streams and focuses on waste reduction, resource recovery and the diversion of waste from landfill. Targets should be based on accurate baseline data and clearly identify roles, responsibilities and funding for each target area.*

7.3 Waste Authority

Local Government considers that an independent and effective Waste Authority is required. The role of the Waste Authority should be of a collaborative, facilitative and strategic nature. Specific activities should include:

1. *Developing, administering, monitoring and reviewing the State Waste Strategy;*
2. *Developing a Priority Waste List (for Extended Producer Responsibility) as required in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007; and*
3. *Developing and implementing an annual Business Plan that delivers the objectives of the Waste Strategy.*

711 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement

The Local Government sector supports the initiation of a State Local Government Partnership Agreement on Waste Management and Resource Recovery.

BACKGROUND

The process to review and update Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements relating to waste management is nearing completion. Three Advocacy Positions remain which have recently been reviewed:

- *7.2 State Waste Strategy* - The substance of this position is covered in the [Advocacy Position 71 Waste Management Legislation](#) which was endorsed by State Council in March 2025, and outlines requirements for State and Australian Government Waste Strategies.
- *7.3 Waste Authority* - This advocacy position is no longer required, as the Waste Authority's legislative requirements are defined under the WARR Act, and other aspects of waste management are addressed through Policy Position 71, endorsed by State Council in March 2025.
- *711 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement* - Partnership agreements have not continued and advocacy efforts are being pursued through a variety of other approaches.

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed the retirement of the three Advocacy Positions at its meeting on 15 October 2025.

COMMENT

A review of all existing Advocacy Positions and Policy Statements has been progressed over the last two years. The three remaining advocacy positions are covered or included in other advocacy positions or have become dated and are no longer a relevant focus of advocacy. The Officers Advisory Group supported retiring the Advocacy Positions acknowledging that they are either incorporated into other existing positions or have become outdated. The Municipal Waste Advisory Council endorsed retiring the three Advocacy Positions and supported a gap analysis of advocacy positions.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council retire Advocacy Positions:

1. 7.2 State Waste Strategy;
2. 7.3 Waste Authority; and
3. 711 Waste Management and Resource Recovery Partnership Agreement.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Jude Sutherland
Seconded: Cr Dwayne Wooltorton

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

CARRIED

7.5 ELECTORAL MATERIAL – AUTHORISATION STATEMENT ADDRESS REQUIREMENTS (STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.5)

By Felicity Morris, Manager Governance and Procurement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Authorisation requirements for electoral material are intended to protect the transparency and accountability of the electoral process.
- The mandatory publication of a street address, often the candidate's home, raises privacy and safety concerns, potentially deterring participation in Local Government elections.
- Other Australian jurisdictions offer more flexible approaches, such as allowing post office boxes or partial addresses, which maintain transparency without compromising safety.
- It is proposed that WALGA advocate that only the locality is included in the authorisation statement.
- The Governance Policy Team revised and endorsed the new advocacy position at its meeting on 20 October.

ATTACHMENT

- [Jurisdictional comparison - Electoral material authorisation requirements](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this report is to provide a new advocacy position for endorsement. WALGA has several existing advocacy positions regarding election matters, but none dealing with electoral material.

BACKGROUND

Section 4.87 of the *Local Government Act 1995* requires all printed, published or distributed electoral material to include the name and address of the person who authorised the electoral material. The address cannot be a post office box. Printed electoral material must also include the name and business address of the printer.

In recent electoral cycles, concerns have been raised regarding the requirement to publish a physical address, often the residential address of the candidate. Members increasingly raised these concerns in the lead up to the 2025 Ordinary Local Government Elections, including at the Mayors and Presidents Forum at the 2025 WALGA Convention.

COMMENT

Authorisation requirements for election advertising are designed to enhance transparency and accountability in the electoral process. By clearly identifying the individual or organisation responsible for electoral communications, these rules ensure that voters can assess the source, credibility, and intent behind campaign materials. This transparency helps voters make informed decisions, discourages misinformation, and prevents "irresponsibility through anonymity". Authorisation also enables regulatory bodies to trace

and address any breaches of electoral laws, reinforcing the integrity of democratic participation.

However, the obligation to publish a candidate's physical address raises significant privacy and safety concerns. Candidates for Local Government elections in Western Australia do not typically have official campaign headquarters. They may not have a business or other suitable address to use and are often required to list their personal residence. The internet and social media have increased the accessibility and permanence of personal information, making it easier for individuals to be targeted. Publicly disclosing a residential address can expose candidates and their families to risks such as harassment, intimidation, or unwanted contact, particularly in contentious or high-profile elections. These concerns are especially acute for candidates from vulnerable groups or those campaigning on polarising issues. This may deter individuals from standing for election, thereby limiting diversity and participation in local democracy.

A review of the requirements in other Australian jurisdictions has been carried out and is provided as an attachment. While many jurisdictions have similar requirements to WA, others have more flexible approaches:

- PO boxes satisfy the address requirement in Local Government elections in South Australia and Victoria.
- The locality (town/city) is sufficient for material that is published by an individual in Local Government elections in the Northern Territory, while a full address is required for material published by an organisation.
- The street name and locality are sufficient for material published by an individual in Territory elections in the Northern Territory, while a full address is required for material published by an organisation.
- Only the name of the person authorising the material is required for ACT Territory elections.

This demonstrates that there are a range of options for identifying the person responsible for the material, without needing to provide their address. The Returning Officer and regulatory bodies have access to candidates' contact and nomination details, ensuring that any breaches can be investigated and enforced without compromising personal privacy. The draft advocacy position recommends that the requirement is limited to the name and locality of the person authorising the material.

It should be acknowledged that elected Council Members may be required to disclose their addresses in Primary and Annual Returns, which are available for public inspection. Similarly, a disclosure of a proximity interest in Council Meeting documents may allow a Council Member's address to be identified. However, these materials are not circulated as widely as electoral materials or subject to the heightened electoral context.

As a final matter, if candidates print materials at home, the WAEC advises that no separate statement of the printer's address is required, as this is satisfied by the authorisation statement. Many Australian jurisdictions do not require the printer's name or address on printed electoral materials. Increasingly, printing may be done through companies operating online only, without physical addresses. The review of authorisation requirements provides an opportunity to remove the requirement to include the printer's details.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA advocate to the State Government to amend section 4.87 of the *Local Government Act 1995* to:

1. Replace the requirement to include the name and address of the person authorising the electoral material, with a requirement to include the name and locality of the person authorising the material.
2. Remove the requirement for the name and business address of the electoral material printer to appear at the end of the electoral material

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Guy Sims

Seconded: President Cr Nicole Batten

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

CARRIED

8 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

8.1 ZONE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

8.2 WALGA STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

Report date: 6 November 2025

State Councillor Report Guide

November 2025 round of Zone meetings

The following is an update on key State Council activities during September, October and part of November 2025.

INFORMATION FORUM

Information Forums are informal briefing sessions for State Council, held bimonthly between State Council meetings.

Presentations at the November Information Forum included:

- WA Planning Commission (WAPC) Chair, Emma Cole presented on the WAPC's new Strategic Plan 2025-2029 and other WAPC priorities including Renewable Energy Planning Code, R-Codes Review and Liveable Neighbourhoods Review.
- Assistant Commissioner Carolyn Francis, from the Office of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, presented on the role of the Commissioner and intersection with Local Governments.

STATE COUNCIL REGIONAL MEETING

Each year, State Council has two regional meetings – one hosted by a Metropolitan Zone and another hosted by a Country Zone. Regional meetings give State Council the opportunity to meet with Elected Members and senior officers from Member Local Governments to discuss topics of regional significance. They also allow State Councillors to gain a first-hand appreciation of the various Issues confronting Local Governments in each Zone.

The Goldfields Esperance Country Zone hosted State Council in Norseman over Thursday, 4 and Friday, 5 September.

Zone Forum

The Zone Forum is the main feature of the Regional State Council meeting as it provides Members with an opportunity to present directly to State Councillors on regional, strategic Local Government issues.

At the Zone Forum, State Councillors were joined by Elected Members and CEOs from seven Local Governments within the Goldfields Esperance Country Zone.

Presentations were received from:

- Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils
- City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
- Shire of Coolgardie
- Shire of Dundas
- Shire of Esperance
- Shire of Menzies
- Shire of Laverton
- Shire of Wiluna

After the Zone Forum, members of the group were taken on a bus tour through Norseman and the wider Shire of Dundas.

State Council meeting

At the September meeting, State Council:

- Adopted a new Advocacy Position on Rating of Renewable Energy Facilities;
- Adopted a new Advocacy Position on Rating of Miscellaneous Licences;
- Updated Advocacy Position 3.7.1 on Community Infrastructure and Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund;
- Updated Advocacy Position 3.2.2 on Rural and Remote Health Services;
- Retired Advocacy Position 3.2 Health;
- Adopted six new Advocacy Positions for Active Transport and Micromobility;
- Deferred the adoption of the updated Corporate Governance Charter and Standing Orders review; and
- Endorsed a new Independent LGISWA Board member.

State Councillors are encouraged to report to their Zone on the outcomes of their Zone's amendments. Please refer to the Full Minutes on the WALGA website [here](#).

FLYING MINUTE

The following have been endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute since the September meeting:

- Submission for draft Guidelines on Community Benefits for Renewable Energy Projects
- Submission for Communications Agreement

- Submission for Draft Amendment Regulations and Supporting Chapters of the WA Planning Manual
- Submission on Phase 2 Reforms of WA's Working with Children Check Law
- Submission to the Education and Health Standing Committee Inquiry into Community Use of WA Public School Facilities
- Submission to the Federal Senate Environment and Communications Reference Committee Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy.

Please refer to the Full Minutes on the WALGA website [here](#).

2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The WALGA Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Tuesday, 23 September as part of the 2025 Local Government Convention. 220 Delegates from 124 Member Local Governments participated in the AGM.

The 2024-2025 Annual Report, including the 2024-2025 Audited Financial Statements, was presented to Members and received. The Association remains in a sound financial position, supported by effective financial management.

The Annual Report is available on the [WALGA website](#).

Five Member Motions were endorsed by the membership:

- Provision of Medical Services in Remote and Very Remote Local Governments
- Homelessness – Short-term Accommodation Solutions
- Rating Exemption Advocacy Position
- Rateability of Miscellaneous Licences

In accordance with the Constitution, these decisions will be considered by State Council at its December meeting.

The Minutes of the AGM are available on the [WALGA website](#).

NEXT MEETING

The next State Council meeting will be at the WALGA office in West Leederville on Wednesday, 3 December.

8.3 WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Cr Karen Chappel provided an overview on her WALGA President's report.

Item was noted.

8.4 STATUS REPORT

By Chantelle O'Brien, Zone Governance Officer

The Northern Country Zone currently has no outstanding items.

8.5 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA – MID WEST

Mark Holdsworth, Director, Regional Development provided a general overview of his report with key discussion points including RDA's 'Grant Guru' grants platform, updates on the DAMA migration program and related workforce needs, and a new committee for international rangeland pastoralism initiatives.

8.6 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY

The November 2025 DLGIRS report was noted.

9 ZONE BUSINESS

9.1 CORRESPONDENCE

9.1.1 Correspondence Out

No outgoing correspondence since the August 2025 meeting.

9.1.2 Correspondence In

No incoming correspondence since the August 2025 meeting.

9.2 DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT AND BANK RECONCILIATION AT OCTOBER 2025

Summary

The following is based on the transactions that occurred between 01 July 2025 and 31 October 2025.

NORTHERN COUNTRY ZONE OF WALGA INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT			
For the period 1 July 2025 to 31 October 2025			
	Date	Amount	Description
Statement Balance B/F	1/07/2025	\$9,980.95	
Deposit			<i>2025-26 annual subs yet to be approved and invoiced</i>
Total Receipts		<u>\$0.00</u>	
Payments Made	02/10/25	-\$72.00	Microsoft Exchange online subscription annual 010825-310726
	02/10/25	-\$75.00	Northern Country Zone EO Mailbox Fees
	03/10/25	-\$31.55	Officeworks - Zone meeting Snacks
	03/10/25	-\$78.07	Officeworks -Name Plates for Zone Meeting
	27/10/25	-\$818.18	Timeless Zone Meeting morning tea
Total Payments Made		-\$1,074.80	
Closing Cash Balance	31/10/25	\$8,906.15	
Amount held in trust by WALGA		\$8,906.15	

The total expenditure incurred between 1 July 2025 and 31 October 2025 was \$1,074.80, resulting in a closing cash balance of \$8,906.15.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Liz Sudlow

Seconded: President Cr Nadine Eva

That the Northern Country Zone October 2025 financial report be received.

CARRIED

9.3 2026 MEETING LOCATION

By Kirsty Martin, Zone Executive Officer, WALGA

BACKGROUND

At the meeting on 25 August 2025, the scheduling of Northern Country Zone meetings for the 2026 calendar year was raised. Currently the location of meetings is rotated through each of the Zone representatives in alphabetical order.

It is proposed that holding all meetings in a more central location may be more efficient for attendees travelling, particularly for invited guests and Members of Parliament who may be attending from Perth. Hosting the meetings at a larger Local Government will also allow other business to be conducted around the scheduled Zone meeting.

COMMENT

The location of meetings and whether meetings are rotated or held at a central location is at the discretion of the Zone.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Liz Sudlow

Seconded: President Cr Guy Sims

That the Northern Country Zone meet in the City of Geraldton for a trial period of 12 months commencing from February 23 2026, with one Zone Member Council doing a presentation at each meeting, with the order of presentations to rotate in alphabetical order.

CARRIED

9.4 2026 MEETING DATES

By Kirsty Martin, Zone Executive Officer, WALGA

BACKGROUND

As has been the case previously, State Council ordinary meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of March, May, July and December in 2026. The September Regional meeting will be held on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 September 2026.

COMMENT

The Northern Country Zone meetings are scheduled to fall on the Monday of the week prior to State Council meetings to ensure that zone meeting minutes can be provided to WALGA Association Governance in a timely manner.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Nicole Batten

Seconded: President Cr Guy Sims

That the Northern Country Zone will meet on the following dates in 2026: Monday 23 February 2026, Monday 20 April 2026, Monday 22 June 2026, Monday 24 August 2026, Monday 23 November 2026.

CARRIED

9.5 2025-26 BUDGET

By Kirsty Martin, Zone Executive Officer, WALGA

The proposed Budget for 2025-2026 has been prepared for consideration as per below.

The Budget includes the collection of subscription fees from each Zone representative to cover the costs of the Zone (eg. catering, IT subscriptions, audit). This is based on the Zone expenses incurred last year.

It has been suggested that the Zone may want to hold a Zone Conference in the future similar to those held by other WALGA Zones. If the Zone would like to pursue this initiative, planning for the Conference could commence with it realistically being held during the 2026-2027 year. Some expenses may be incurred this year.

Last year the Great Eastern Country Zone held a Conference which cost approximately \$16,000. Each Zone representative contributed equally and this contribution was included in their annual subscription fees.

Based on similar costings, it is proposed that each Northern Country Zone representative contributes \$2,000 per annum subscription fees to cover Zone expenses and a Conference.

	BUDGET 2025-26	Comments
Income		
Zone Representative Subscriptions (9 x \$2,000)	\$18,000	Includes collection of funds for Conference in 2026-27
Total Income	\$18,000	
Expenses		
Audit Fees	\$300	Assume – 4% increase from last year.
Meeting Costs	\$4,500	Catering
IT Fees	\$180	Annual Fee for email address
Zone Conference	\$13,000	Unlikely to all be expended in 2025-26 year.
Total Expenses	\$17,980	

RESOLUTION

Moved: Mayor Jerry Clune
Seconded: President Cr Liz Sudlow

That the 2025-2026 Budget, including \$2,000 annual subscription fees per Zone Member (10), is received.

CARRIED 10/0

9.6 ZONE CONFERENCE

By Kirsty Martin, Zone Executive Officer, WALGA

Holding a North Country Zone Conference presents an opportunity for Local Government leaders within the Zone to get together and share current issues and experiences as well as learn from invited guest speakers.

In March 2025, the Great Easter Country Zone held a Conference themed *Re-imagining the Future of the Wheatbelt – Sustaining the Present, Building for the Future*. The event was positively received with over 100 attendees, including Elected Members, Local Government CEOs and other invited guests.

The Conference program included the following sessions presented by a variety of speakers from both within the Local Government sector and from external organisations:

- Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA)
- Sustainable Regional Communities – Education and Ageing in Place
- Focus on Local Emergency Management
- Future Local Leaders: Insights from Experienced Elected Members
- Wheatbelt Economic Snapshot
- Rural Health
- Navigating the Renewable Energy Transition

The Conference was led by a Conference Subcommittee which included Members established by the Zone and was supported by WALGA. A professional MC (Di Darmody) was engaged, and the event also included a networking sundowner.

If the Zone is interested in holding a Conference, the Zone Executive can work with WALGA to commence preliminary planning. A suitable time, location, theme, and speakers can then be explored and presented back to the Zone for decision at the appropriate time.

RESOLUTION

Moved: President Cr Liz Sudlow

Seconded: President Cr Nadine Eva

That the Executive of the Northern Country Zone will further develop the planning of a future Zone Conference, with preference for it to be held on a Friday in March 2027.

10 GENERAL BUSINESS

As per Item 35 of the Zone Standing Orders, a Delegate may under General Business introduce a motion relating to any item of interest to Local Government, but not otherwise.

10.1 CALL TO GUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Shane Love MLA

A brief update was given on current State Government actions affecting the local government sector, including the discussions on amalgamations and ongoing work related to miscellaneous licences. Concerns were raised that the Government has not fully evaluated the impacts of changes to these licences, as well as recent legislative changes such as the 'all in, all out' approach in relation to Local Government Elections.

Mid West Development Commission – Nils Hay

The Commission's update covered the WA Government's six priorities, including ongoing advocacy for increased REDS project funding, progress in regional drought resilience

planning for pilot areas, and developments in agri-strategy. Emma Foulkes Taylor will finish up in December, with a community board vacancy closing this week. A digital economy strategy is nearing completion and aligns well with the upcoming R-Net technology activation. The Mid West Major Projects Conference is scheduled for 29–30 April.

Mr Nils Hay provided the below links to be included in the meeting minutes:

Link to current RED Grant application page for Mid West:

<https://www.mwdc.wa.gov.au/business-and-industry-support/red-grants.aspx>

Link to Mid-West Major Projects Conference:

<https://www.informa.com.au/event/conference/resources/midwest-gascoyne-major-project-update/>

Link to information on the Regional Housing Support Fund:

<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/regional-housing-support-fund>

10.2 REGIONAL ISSUES

As per the resolution at Item 9.1 of the February 2018 meeting, Regional Issues are open for discussion.

10.3 OTHER GENERAL BUSINESS

Members discussed ongoing issues with RAV rating and recent changes to CA07 notifications for local governments regarding heavy vehicles.

Members agreed to extend a formal invitation to CBH to attend the 23 February 2026 meeting.

11 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Northern Country Zone will be held Monday, 23 February 2026 at the City of Greater Geraldton commencing at 10am.

12 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.00pm.