

State Council Agenda 10 July 2024

Ordinary meeting no. 3 of 2024 of the Western Australian Local Government Association State Council to be held at ONE70, LV1, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville at 4.15pm.

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1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

1.2 ATTENDANCE

Members	WALGA President - Chair WALGA Deputy President Central Metropolitan Zone Avon-Midland Country Zone Central Country Zone Central Metropolitan Zone East Metropolitan Zone East Metropolitan Zone Gascoyne Country Zone Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Great Eastern Country Zone Great Southern Country Zone Kimberley Country Zone Murchison Country Zone North Metropolitan Zone North Metropolitan Zone North Metropolitan Zone Northern Country Zone Peel Country Zone Pilbara Country Zone South East Metropolitan Zone South East Metropolitan Zone South Metropolitan Zone South Metropolitan Zone South Metropolitan Zone South West Country Zone	President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP Cr Paul Kelly President Chris Antonio President Cr Phil Blight Cr Helen Sadler President Paige McNeil Cr Emily Wilding President Eddie Smith President Cr Laurene Bonza Cr Stephen Strange Cr Scott Crosby President Chris Mitchell President Cr Les Price Cr Michael Dudek Cr Lewis Hutton Cr Bronwyn Smith President Cr Liz Sudlow (Deputy) President Cr Mike Walmsley (Deputy) Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks Mayor Patrick Hall Vacant - To be advised Mayor Logan Howlett JP Cr Karen Wheatland Cr Barry Winmar President Julia Meldrum (Deputy)
Ex Officio	The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor – City of Perth Local Government Professionals WA President	Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas Mr Anthony Vuleta
Observers		
Secretariat	Chief Executive Officer Executive Director Member Services Executive Manager Infrastructure Executive Manager Policy Executive Manager Advocacy Chief Financial Officer Manager Governance and Procurement Manager Association and Corporate Governance Executive Officer Governance	Mr Nick Sloan Mr Tony Brown Mr Ian Duncan Ms Nicole Matthews Ms Rachel Horton Mr Rick Murray Mr James McGovern Ms Kathy Robertson Ms Meghan Dwyer

1.3 APOLOGIES

Members	Northern Country Zone	President Cr Kirrilee Warr
	Peel Country Zone	Mayor Rhys Williams
	South West Country Zone	President Cr Tony Dean

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

WALGA is committed to supporting the efforts of WA Local Governments to foster respectful partnerships and strengthen relationships with local Aboriginal communities.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

4 MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE STATE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 1 MAY 2024

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the WALGA State Council meeting held on [1 May 2024](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

4.1.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE STATE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 1 MAY 2024

4.2 FLYING MINUTE - SUBMISSION ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SECTOR ADAPTATION PLAN

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That the [Flying Minute - Submission on Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

4.2.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE FLYING MINUTE- SUBMISSION ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SECTOR ADAPTATION PLAN

4.3 FLYING MINUTE - STATE WAGE CASE SUBMISSION

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That the [Flying Minute - State Wage Case Submission](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

4.3.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE FLYING MINUTE- STATE WAGE CASE SUBMISSION

4.4 FLYING MINUTE - LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABILITY INQUIRY

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That the [Flying Minute - Local Government Sustainability Inquiry](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

4.4.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE FLYING MINUTE- LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABILITY INQUIRY

4.5 FLYING MINUTE - STANDARDISED MEETING PROCEDURES SUBMISSION

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That the [Flying Minute - Standardised Meeting Procedures Submission](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

4.5.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE FLYING MINUTE- STANDARDISED MEETING PROCEDURES SUBMISSION

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to our Code of Conduct, State Councillors must declare to the Chair any potential conflict of interest they have in a matter before State Council as soon as they become aware of it.

6 EX OFFICIO REPORTS

6.1 CITY OF PERTH REPORT

The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas will provide the City of Perth report to the meeting.

6.2 LG PROFESSIONALS REPORT

Mr Anthony Vuleta, President, LG Professionals WA, will provide a report to the meeting.

7 EMERGING ISSUES

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

8 MATTERS FOR DECISION

8.1 CARAVAN PARK AND CAMPING GROUNDS REGULATIONS

By Coralie Claudio, Senior Policy Advisor, Planning

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.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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 of 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 off 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.

Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations

Policy Statement

WALGA requests the State Government amends Part 2 of the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997* to:

1. Allow Local Governments to consider camping on private property for a period of greater of three months.
2. Allow Local Governments to establish policy to guide approvals beyond 3 months to ensure that camping is locally appropriate and provide for circumstances where caravans, predominately in form of tiny homes on wheels, can be occupied on a more permanent basis.

Background

Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOWs) are an emerging form of housing that offers an alternative and affordable housing option in the current housing crisis. However, they do not fit neatly into existing regulations, meaning there are high levels of uncertainty pursuing this accommodation for long term occupation.

A THOWs 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).

The Regulations currently restrict the occupation of caravans to up to 3 months if approved by Local Governments or up to 12 months if approved by the Minister for Local Government.

An urgent review and update to Part 2 of the Regulations is proposed 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 (ie THOWs) is appropriate for the amenity of the locality.

8.2 2024 AUDIT EXPERIENCE SURVEY RESULTS AND ADVOCACY POSITION

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Associate and Corporate Governance

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.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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.

AUDIT SURVEY ANALYSIS 2024

Introduction

Local Government Professionals WA partnered with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) last year to produce our first survey of local governments' annual audit experience. This followed the formal transfer of audit responsibilities from the Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries to the Office of the Auditor General under the *Local Government Amendment (Auditing) Act 2017*.

It was decided to repeat the survey for 2024 in an attempt to create a comparison over time and measure any shift in the experience of the sector since the first survey. The OAG has again encouraged the Associations in this survey process and welcomes this contribution from the peak bodies to inform their continued improvement.

The survey was jointly reviewed by the Associations to ensure consistency with the past survey and also enable a deeper look at outcomes relative to the audit companies undertaking the audits and whether any issues were particular to certain audit firms.

A total of 83 (56.8%) local governments responded to the 2024 survey, compared to 91 (62.3%) in 2023. Whilst a slightly lower level of participation was experienced this year, it is still more than half of local governments within the sector.

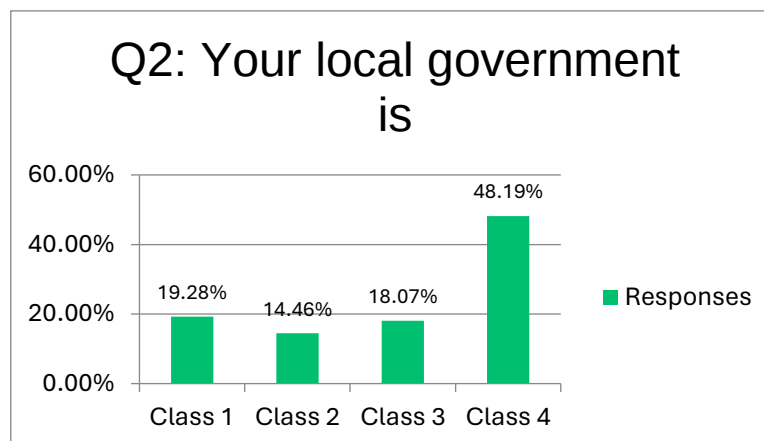
Data and quotations from the survey are provided with no identifying information so as to maintain the anonymity of the 83 local governments referenced as respondents.

Responses are presented in chart form, demonstrating the percentage of respondents indicating support for the available choices, followed by an indicative summary of the written comments that relate to each question.

The Key Emerging Issues are identified at the end of this report, together with a comparison of last year's results and an outline of the advocacy that Local Government Professionals WA proposes to take in response to the survey outcomes. It is anticipated that WALGA will develop its own advocacy to address the findings and we encourage all local governments to participate in that process.

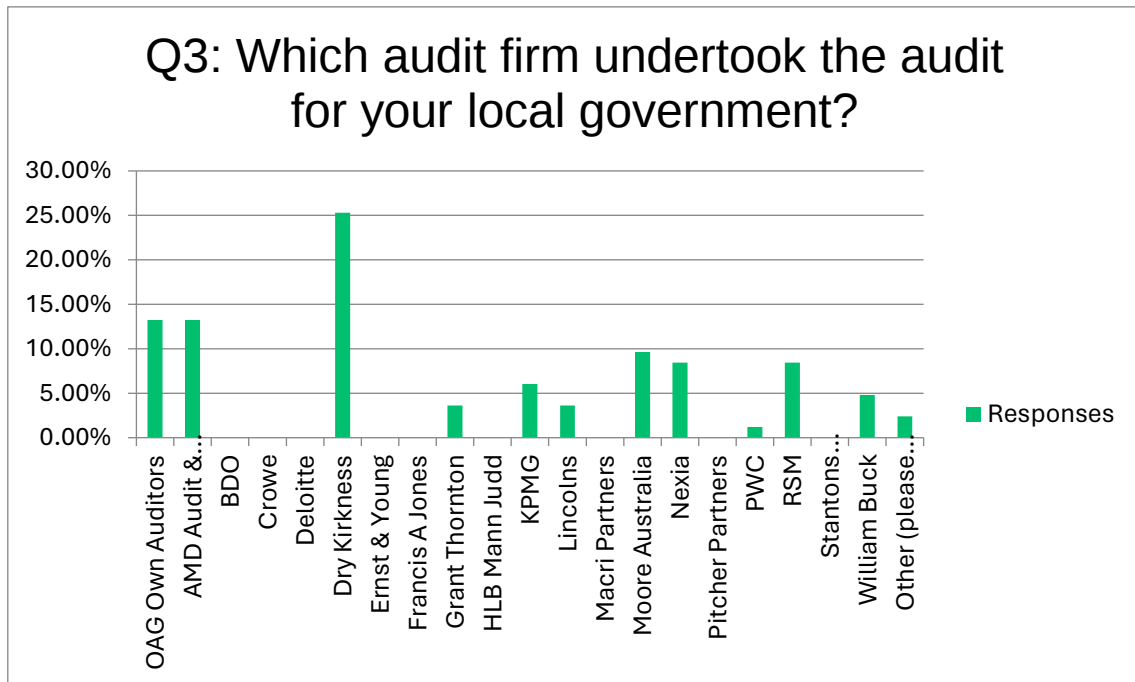
Analysis

In the 2024 survey we asked for local governments to identify which class of local government they belonged to, to reflect the introduction of "classes" into the Act.

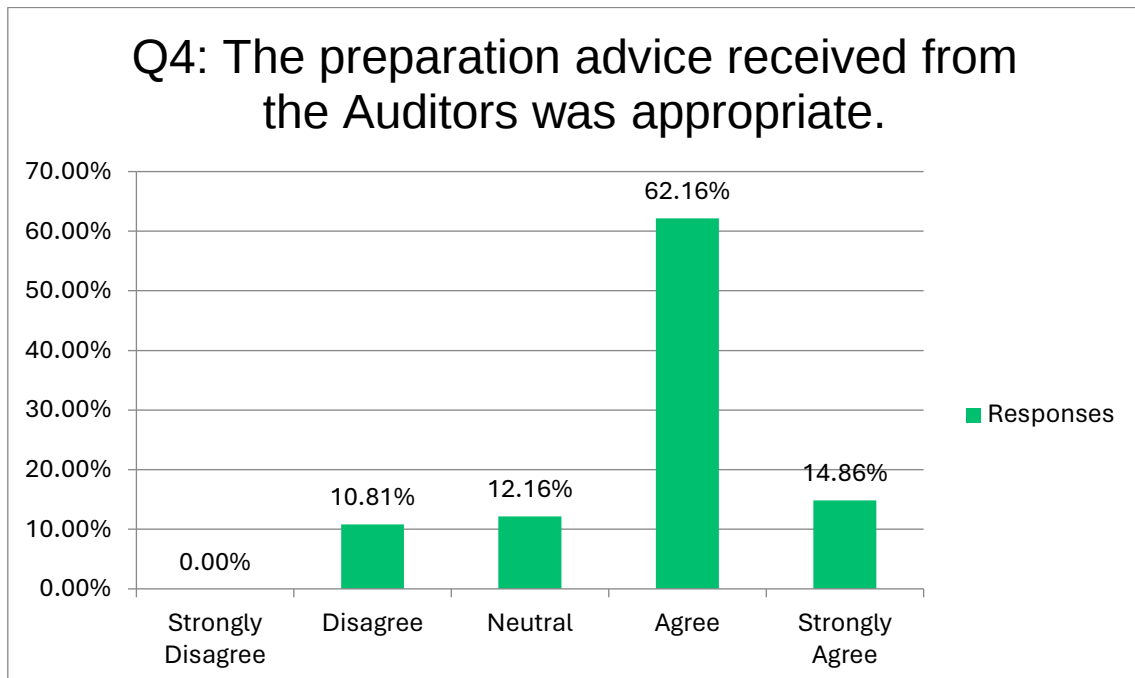


	Across All Local Governments WA	Survey respondents
Class 1	16.5%	19.3%
Class 2	15.1%	14.5%
Class 3	25.2%	18%
Class 4	43.2%	48.2%

As can be seen, the responses are broadly indicative of the split between classes across the sector.



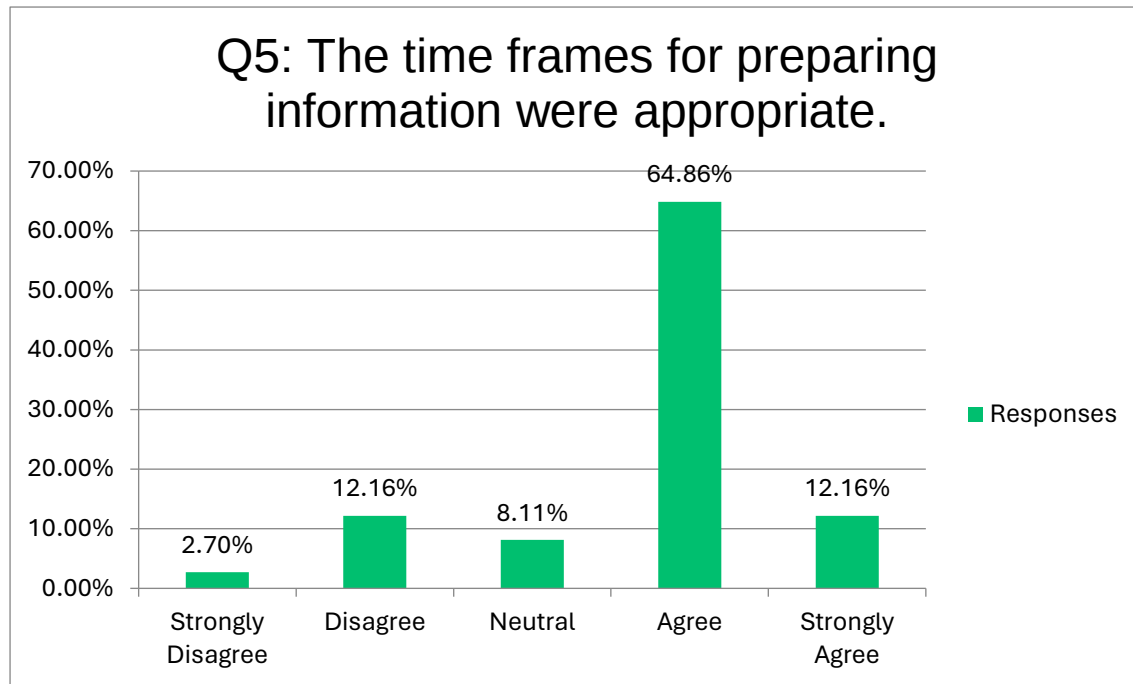
The dominant audit firm in terms of number of audits undertaken was Dry Kirkness which was contracted to 21 (25%) respondent local governments – 13 class 4, 6 class 3 & 2 class 2. Only one firm was identified in the “Other” category, that being Armada Auditing.



89% of respondent local governments were neutral or satisfied with the preparation advice of the Auditors, compared to 81.8% in the last survey – an improvement of 7.2%. Approximately 5% of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement previously, however no respondents were significantly dissatisfied this year.

Comments included:

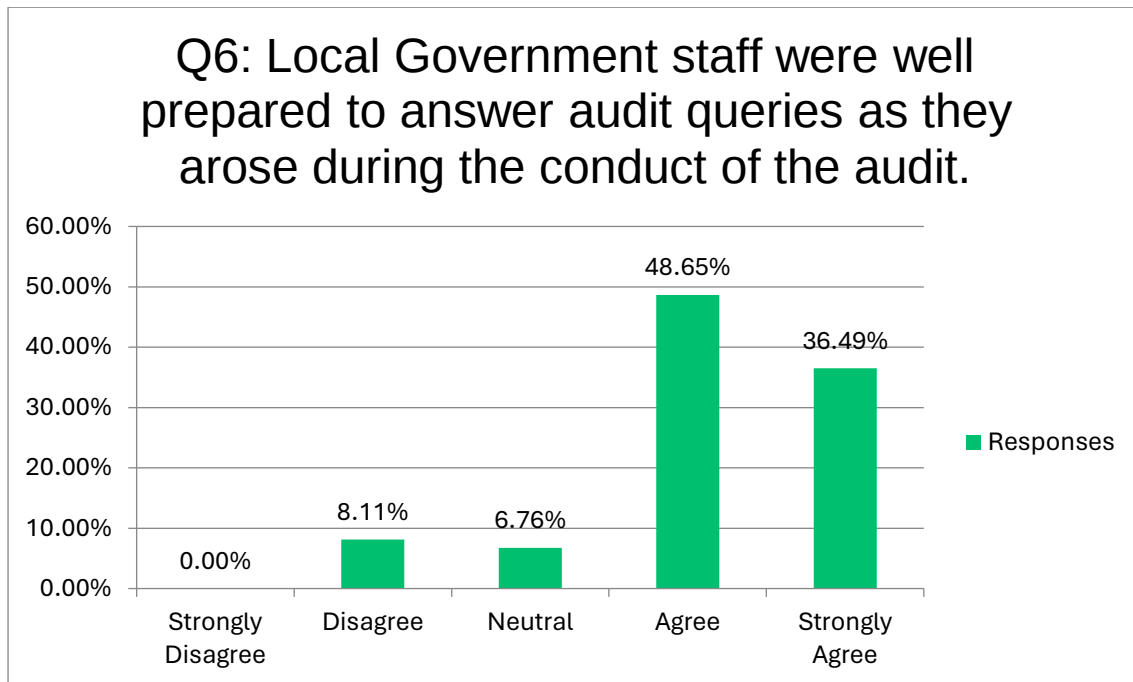
- “Yes, most instructions were straight forward requests.”
- “Yes - improved this year due to (Audit Firm) assigning one person to oversee the requests and its portal.”
- “The advice from the OAG was understated in relation to the IT aspect of the audit process. The preparation advice received was underwhelming with what the city experienced.”



Approximately 85% of respondents were comfortable with the timeframes for preparation of information for the audit, compared to 80% in the 2023 survey. The spread of responses was milder this year, with a consolidation of the responses away from the “neutral” column (23.38% down to 8.11%) and into the ‘agree’ column (48.05% up to 64.86%).

Comments included:

- “Achievable, however additional pressure was placed on the team. When your finance team is limited to 2-3 Officer completing EOY, Budget and Audit requirements simultaneously is a considerable workload.”
- “Accommodated the Town’s needs whilst we experienced staffing shortages”.
- “This is always a time consuming process but (Audit Firm) are relatively patient and work with us for their requests”.
- “The OAG were organised and on time. They even catered for a request to expediate the audit conclusion as a result of another Council being late in providing infrastructure revaluation information”.

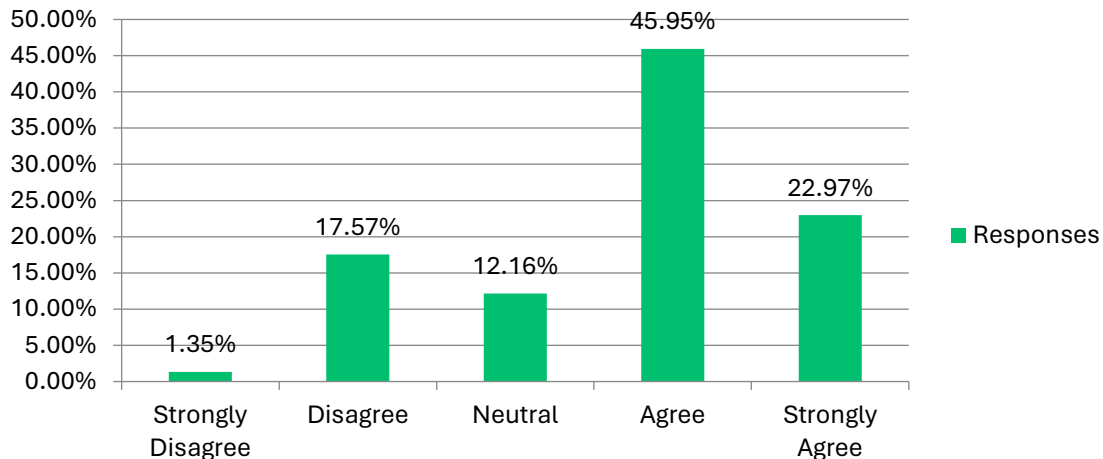


Only 8.11% of respondents felt they were not well prepared to deal with the auditors' questions during the course of the audit, which equates to last year's survey. Relatedly, the confidence and level of preparedness by staff has increased since last year's survey, with a comparative number of local governments responding positively, but an increase in those strongly agreeing with the statement (up from 26% last year).

Comments included:

- "Turnover of key staff in our Finance team did not help. New staff did their very best but fell short of (Audit Firm) expectations".
- "Great working relationship between the Finance Team and OAG as well as the IT Team and OAG."
- "All staff were made aware of the Auditors visit timeframe and that they may be required to answers questions from the Auditors".

Q7: All audit preparation requirements requested by the auditor were provided prior to the audit site visit.

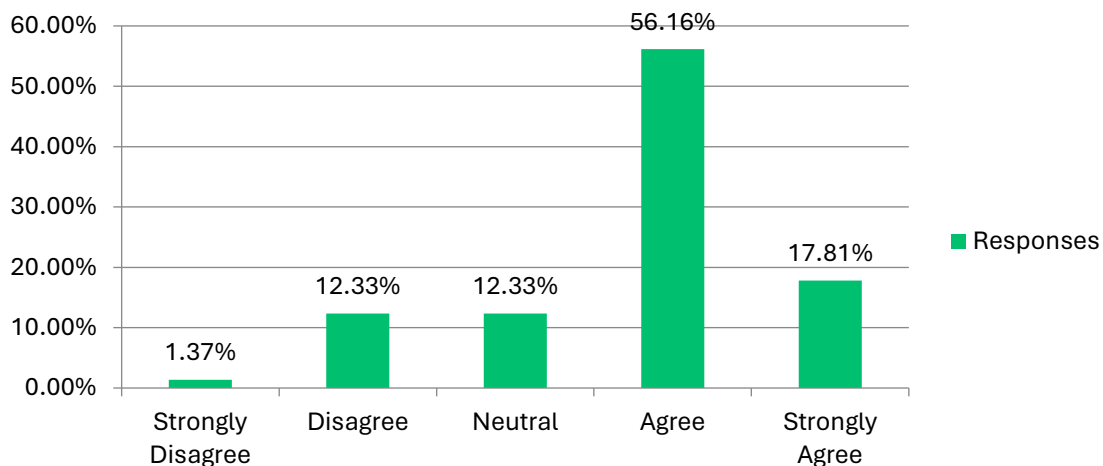


Approximately 19% of respondents felt that the preparation requirements of the auditors had not been provided sufficiently prior to the audit, which represents a negative shift in the order of 4.5% this year.

Comments included:

- “Unfortunately, we received the requirements list on the Friday, with them commencing on the Monday, so documents were (a) rush to get ready, but not all documents were able to be provided by the time they came in.”
- “The auditors did not request all info and therefore kept following up during and post site visit.”
- “Not all testing criteria was provided prior to the visit.”

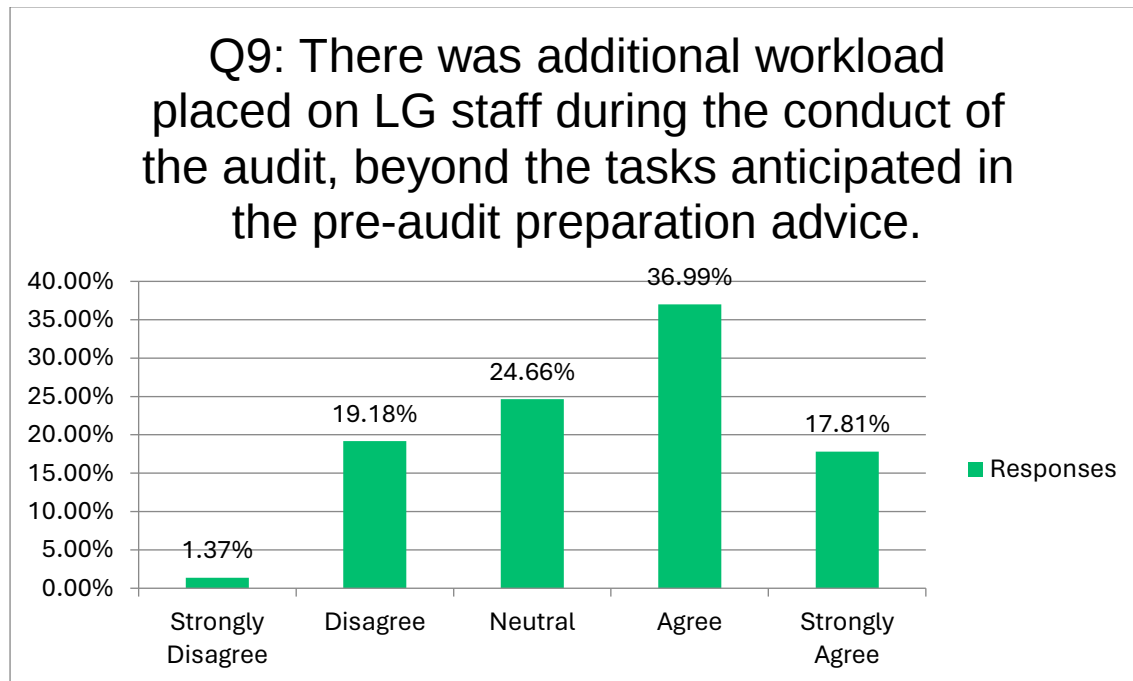
Q8: The audit staff had adequate local government knowledge and awareness to assist them in performing the audit.



Sector awareness and local government knowledge of the auditors was deemed lacking by nearly 14% of respondents, compared to over 34% last year. This represents an important improvement and positive shift between the two survey periods.

Comments included:

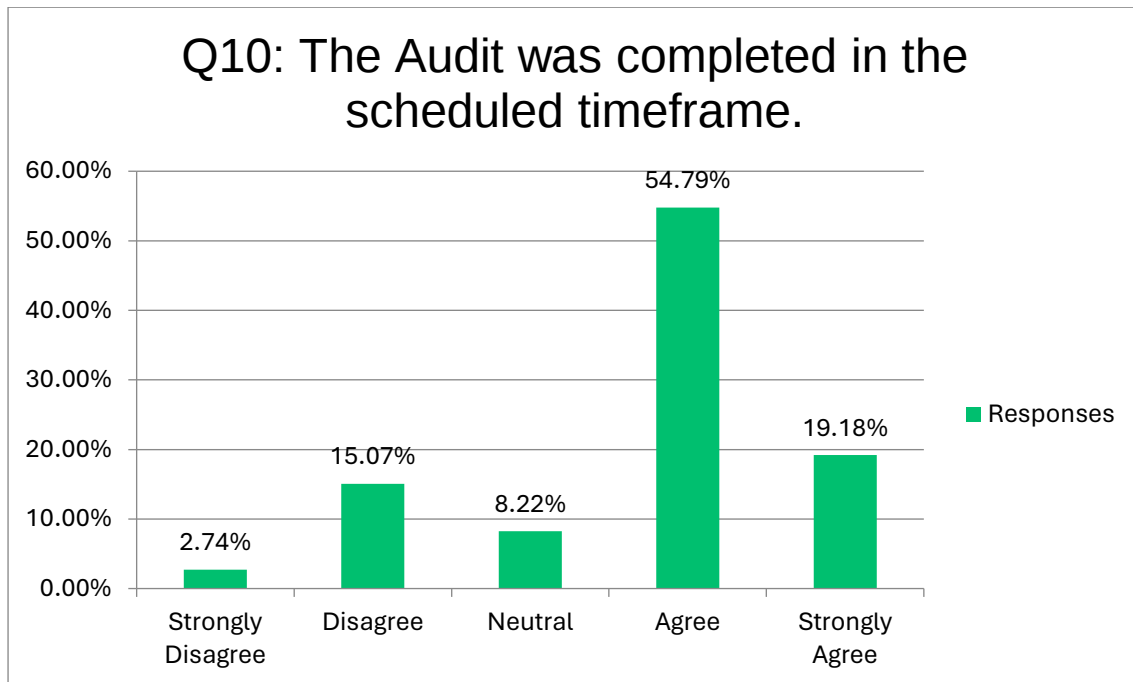
- *“An experienced senior auditor was onsite to assist those with less experience or new to LG auditing.”*
- *“We always get new staff with (Audit Firm) but they came prepared enough.”*
- *“Has improved over the years of the contract.”*
- *“One officer had audited the Shire the prior year and the other new officer would seek advice from the other prior to asking our staff.”*



Again, this year it was felt by over 50% of respondents that a greater workload was placed on local government staff than was anticipated in the pre-audit preparation instructions. Concerns remain around multiple responses to the same questions, lost or misplaced information, and the need for additional background explanations to auditors.

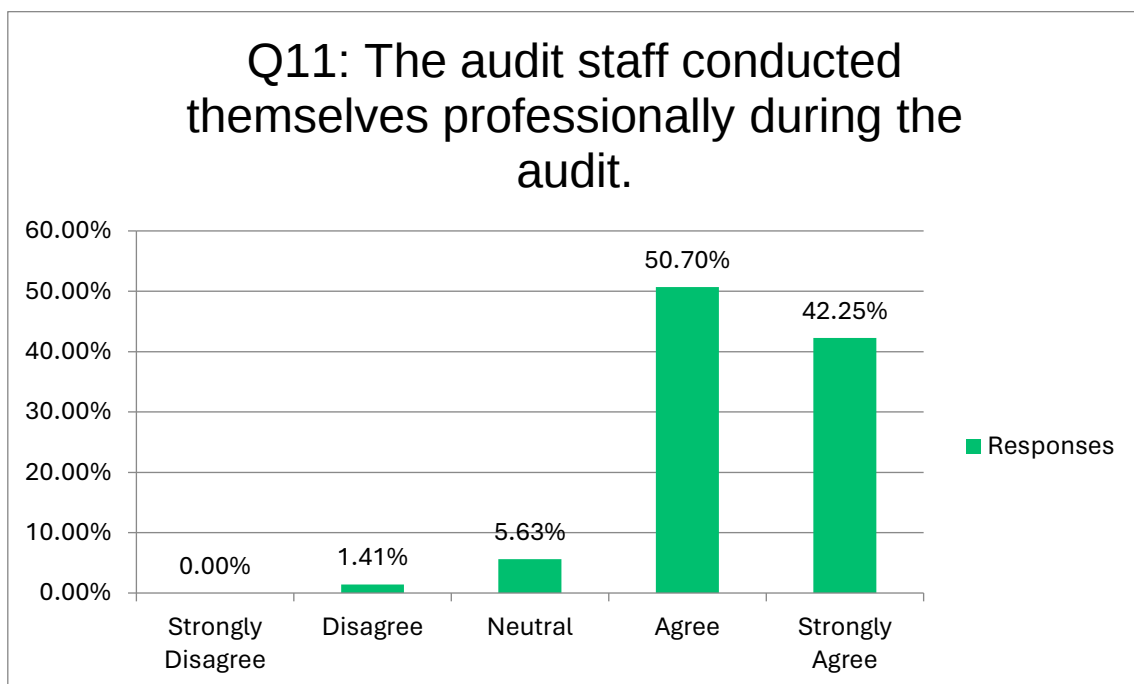
Comments included:

- *Scanning and uploading almost all the sample documents the auditors (wanted) to see even though the documents (were) provided to them by LG staff during their site visit.*
- *“Repeated questioning for material that was provided and lost by the auditor chewed up resources at multiple levels.”*
- *“Continuous explanation of workings and background to items that would be considered common practice.”*
- *“The workload during audit is always extremely high. It is very difficult to say whether the workload was higher than anticipated, because the overall work generated during the conduct of the audit is already so high.”*



Approximately 82% of respondent agreed or did not dispute that the audit was completed within the expected timeframe, compared to only 48% last year. Notably, this represented a considerable decrease in the number of respondents who strongly disagreed with this statement (from 30% last year).

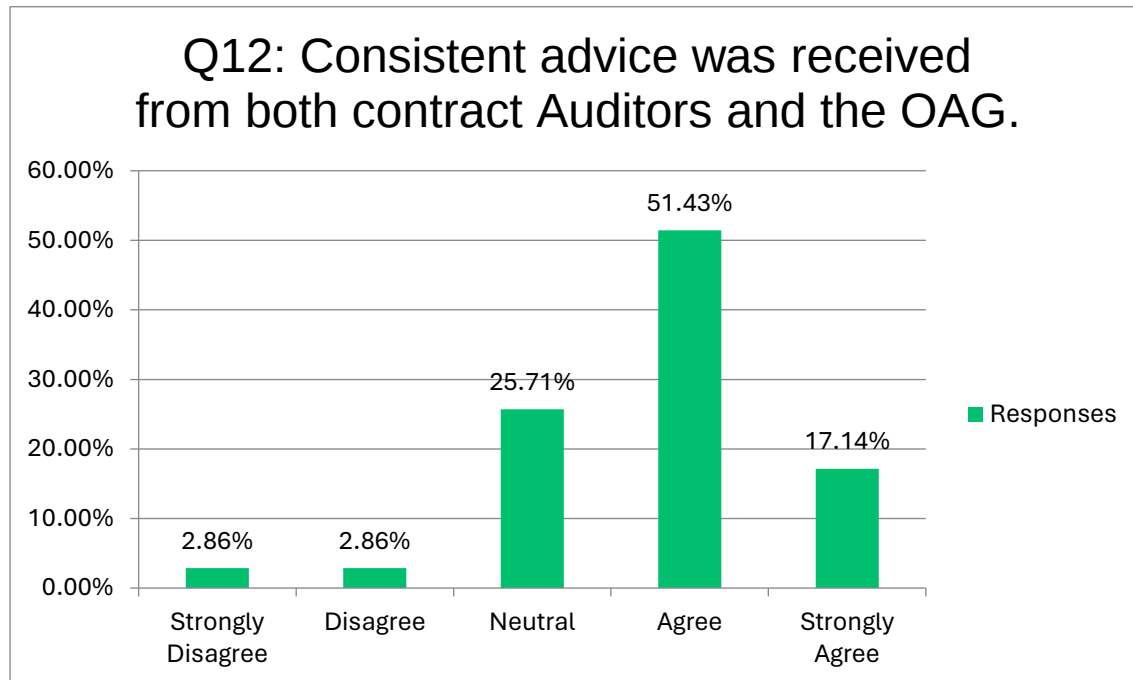
- “...the OAG finished earlier than planned due to City being ready with key information requirements especially related to revaluation of assets.”
- “Our annual report was done by December, but I feel that is an achievement on our end as opposed to any indication of the quality of service.”
- “It was better this year than last year!”



The professional conduct of audit staff was appreciated by the vast majority of (98.6%) respondent local governments – a 5.5% improvement over 2023.

Comments included:

- *“Generally (Audit firm) staff were professional about their work.”*
- *“I have found (Audit firm) and OAG highly professional, helping us finalise (the) AFR.”*
- *“The OAG team were great to deal with. The City even wrote to the OAG to compliment the AG on the staff professionalism.”*

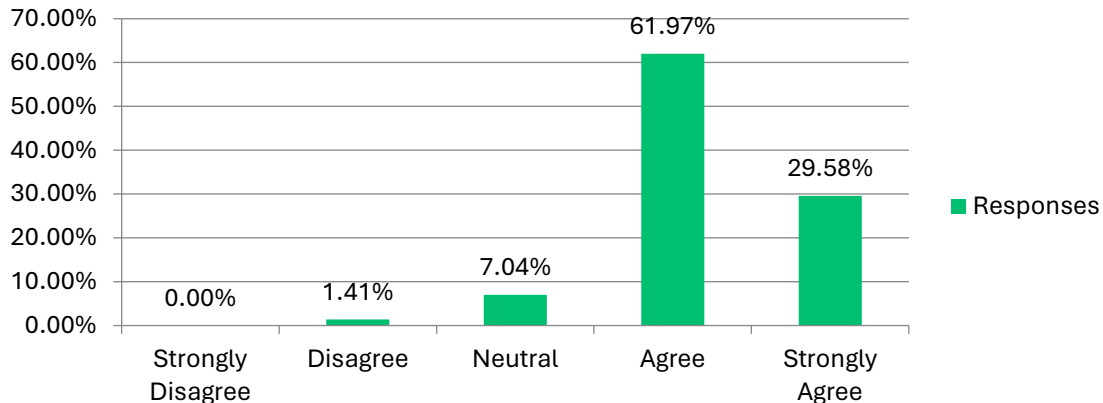


Less than 6% of respondents felt that there was inconsistency between the advice of the Contract Auditors and that received from the OAG. This compares favourably with last year's survey result of 19.7%.

Comments included:

- *“Yes, both were on the same page.”*
- *“In our experience this has improved significantly from previous years.”*
- *“The OAG provided consistent information especially around infrastructure assets, which was a significant issue for the 2021/22 financial audit.”*

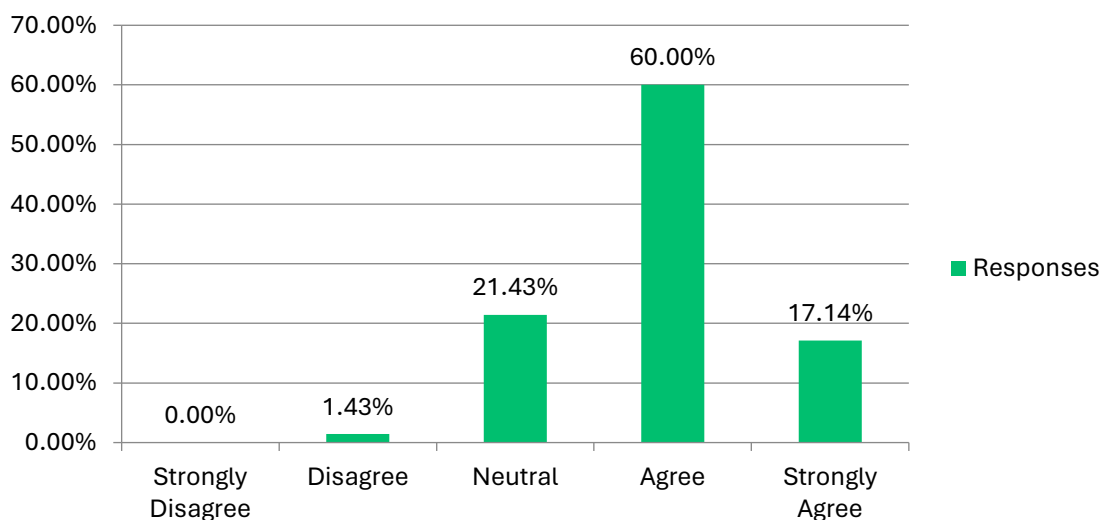
Q13: The Auditor presented the final audit result to the Local Government in accordance with Section 7.12AD of the Local Government Act.



Whilst this question was slightly reworded from last year ("The Auditor presented the final audit result to Council in an appropriate manner"), nearly all respondents were satisfied that the audit result had been presented as required, which is the essence of the question. This compared with 86.1% for the similar question last year and is perhaps demonstrative of improvement in both skill and familiarity with the sector.

Most comments related to the pending nature of some final results.

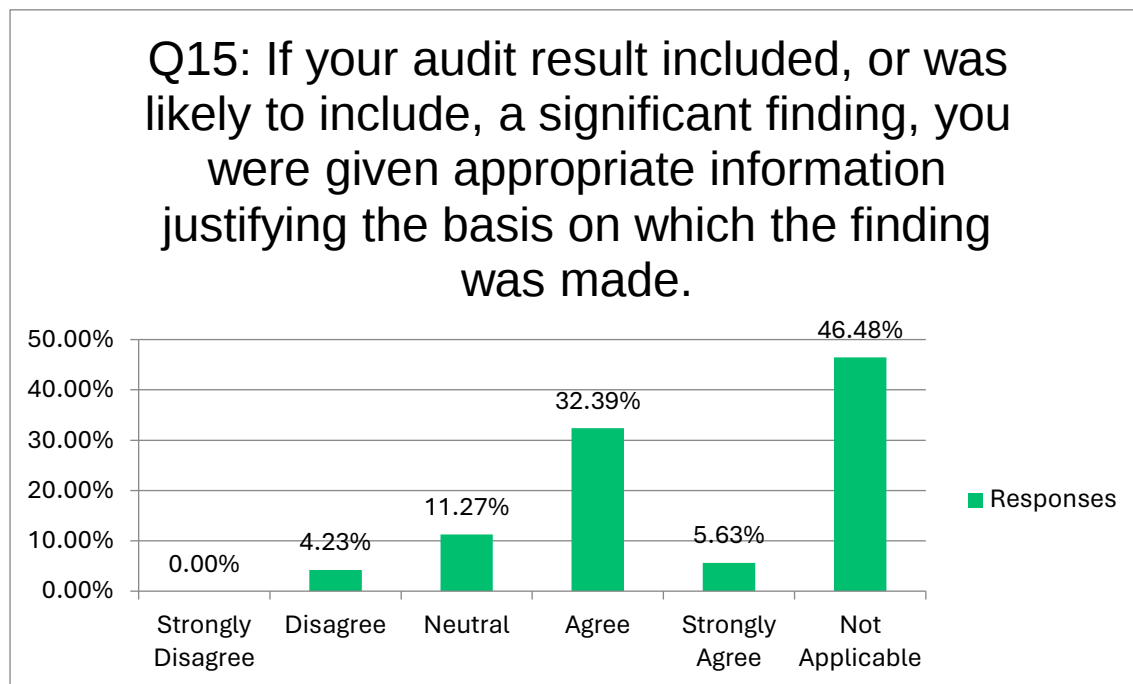
Q14: The Audit results could easily be presented for community reporting.



Nearly all were neutral or satisfied that the reports could be easily presented to the community, a slight improvement on what was already a highly rated outcome in last year's survey.

Comments referred to audit results in general being outside of the understanding of an ordinary, non-financial community member:

- *“Accounts are a bit complex for the ordinary ratepayer.”*
- *“We had a lengthy IT audit comment which could have been squeezed into 3-4 pointers. While we appreciate the requirement from OAG's perspective, (it's) hard to communicate (it) to (the) community!”*
- *“The auditors letter is not easily understood by non-financial community members. The Financial Report is similar.”*

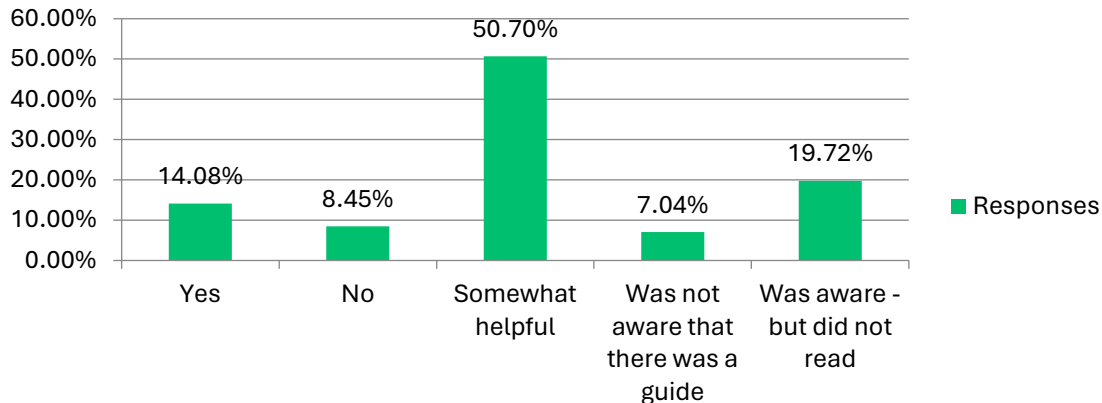


Less than 5% of respondents disputed this statement compared to 12.5% in 2023. This swing is attributed to clarity around asset valuation and improved communications, both of which were concerns expressed last year that have been the subject of advocacy with the OAG and DLGSC during the last 12 months.

Comments included:

- *“The first pass was quite poor and the auditors tend to want everything to be significant even if it has minimal impact on shire operations. Once challenged they reassess or provide more detailed findings and recommendations.”*
- *“The City has one significant finding. The City disagreed with the assessment, but the OAG were not prepared to modify their assessment.”*
- *“There is a significant different in what the AG sees as significant (one issue, one time) as opposed to there being evidence of significant non-compliance (many incidents of each matter).”*

Q16: Did your local government find the new OAG Better Practice Guide for the current audit to be helpful in preparing for your audit.



This was a new question for this year. Approximately 8% did not find the Guide of assistance; 7% were not aware of the Guide; and a further 20% knew about the Guide but did not read it. Nearly 65% found the Guide of at least some assistance. It is of concern that some chose not to utilise the Guide when it has been provided to support them through the audit process.

Comments included:

- “Yes, it was a good thing to read.”
- “If an officer is unable to scale the information to suit their LG size this may be slightly overwhelming at first. Overall, the information provided was helpful.”
- “The tools are definitely helpful, the Audit Readiness document is just an overview and not that helpful, perhaps more helpful to LG officers who are not accountants.”

Q17: Estimated audit cost versus actual final audit costs

The lowest **actual cost** indicated was a class 3 LG at **\$24,090** (\$22,000 in 2023) and the highest was a class 1 LG at **\$146,250** (\$138,873 in 2023). The **average actual costs** for the various classes of local governments were:

- Class 1: \$98,312
- Class 2: \$54,804
- Class 3: \$48,008
- Class 4: \$35,689

Of those local governments that incurred an increase in actual costs over estimated costs, the average increase was **5.5%** (\$6,755).

The average reduction experienced by those who achieved a lower actual cost than estimated was **3.7%** (\$2,900).

The largest cost increase above estimate was **20.16%** (\$21,170 – a class 1 LG), whilst the largest cost saving compared to estimate was **25.4%** (\$9,910 – a class 3 LG).

27 LGs reported cost savings on estimated costs this year compared with only two last year.

Q18: Compared to the 2021/22 audit, did you observe any improvement or changes to the 2022/23 audit process that was worth noting?

There was a diverse range of responses, as might be expected.

The main themes to emerge in terms of improvements were around:

- the **evolving relationship** with the OAG and auditors generally;
- adherence to the **audit completion timeframe** was valued; and;
- some **improvement in sector knowledge** was referenced.

Some respondents remained critical of the audit indicating **little or no change** from their past experiences.

Relevant comments to this question include:

- *“starting with assessing whether previous findings have been addressed (is) a good approach.”*
- *“yes, more efficient and lot more knowledge and understanding in how LG works.”*
- *“better, they were more experienced; less newbies. We demanded one point of contact...all emails thru Manager, not to individual staff. Key lesson.”*
- *“Significant improvement in attention to our business in exclusion to others, dramatic reduction to time required to complete the audit. Better knowledge by Senior audit staff of LG specific matters.”*
- *“Slightly better than the prior year, removing ratios and several notes was helpful.”*
- *“The model financial report ensured there weren't any requests for format changes which was helpful and improved efficiency.”*
- *“For 21/22 I felt that the auditors were 'over-auditing' local governments to ensure they had enough evidence for the OAG - like the auditors were being audited. They didn't know what was going to be asked of them when presenting our files. Huge improvement here in 22/23.”*
- *“I think completing the audit within timeline and proactiveness on achieving that was a great win.”*
- *“The cost was less than the previous year, the process was somewhat better, the focus on IT seems to be outside of the remit of the Annual Financial Report Audit.”*
- *“Discussion around audit timetable was better. Collaboration between all parties to achieve that desired outcome. Audit Partner had open communication and a collaborative style.”*
- *“The 2022/23 audit was an improvement on the prior two years. (The audit firm) has worked diligently to ensure that we have received a consistent audit team, which has gone a long way to ensuring a smooth audit. We have developed a good working relationship with the audit conduct team, which has meant that we can move through audit issues quickly.”*
- *“No, very similar experience.”*
- *“None at all. In fact auditors put more stress on LG staff wanting their requested documents immediately provided to them as they have other (more) LGs to audit within their timeframe.”*
- *“No. I feel like the audits are becoming more involved with things like cybersecurity, process & procedures. I really embrace the opportunity to bring things up to best practice but without engaging & retaining skilled staff & without the capacity of employing new staff, the workload becomes untenable.”*

Q19: Do you have any other comments you would like to make in relation to your 2022/23 audit experience?

There was a mix of responses, mostly positive, reflecting some **common themes** such as:

- continuing **concern about costs**;
- the opportunity for **common statistical data** to be provided to the sector in terms inflation and discount rates, and;
- **support for the audit deadline** initiative.

Indicative comments include:

- *“Would be great if OAG could provide all local governments with a CPI and discount rates every year in June/July for when we need to calculate Landfill remediation liabilities etc. Instead, each Shire must find own rates and have reasoning on why we think it’s appropriate. Different Shires potentially then use different rates. Be great to be standard across all Shires.”*
- *“The OAG deadline for audits was a good initiative and kept auditors and LG staff rolling to ensure completion. Though the implications for not meeting this deadline weren’t clear.”*
- *“The (Audit firm) were fantastic to work with and we achieved a great result by the deadline.”*
- *“The flexibility to choose an auditor for the RTR & LRCI audit is a welcome change. (The contract auditor’s) fees for these audits are significantly higher than other firms in this space, so it was a welcome change to save money on this statutory requirement.”*
- *“A reduced timeframe to review the Financial Statements from Auditors to OAG would be recommended, we had to inquire the progress of our statements a number of times.”*
- *“The City would like to see greater transparency in how audit fees are calculated. The City has requested this information from the OAG on numerous occasions but has never received an adequate explanation. This is ironic given the OAG’s championing of transparency and accountability.”*
- *“We continue to question value for money with this service, the reluctance of the auditor or the OAG to provide a comprehensive cost breakdown makes value difficult to assess.”*
- *“The Cost is unreasonably high taking into account the size and scale of the organisation.”*
- *“The City would like an earlier audit as the timeline to have the financial statements approved at our December meeting is very tight.”*
- *“Although there was reduced reporting requirements for Band 4 LG’s, auditors still requested the working for the reduced reporting.”*

Audit Firm Analysis

In order to determine if there were particular issues associated with individual audit firms a review of the questions related to audit firm performance (*as opposed to those examining the performance of the local government*) was undertaken.

(Please note: Values represent % of respondents replying either Neutral or favourable to the question.)

	Dry Kirkness	OAG	AMD Audit & Assurance	Moore Australia	Nexia	RSM	KPMG	William Buck	Grant Thornton	Lincolns	Armada Accountants & Advisors
Q4	The preparation advice received from the Auditors was appropriate.										
	89.5	77.8	100	100	85.7	71.4	100	100	100	100	0
Q5	The time frames for preparing information were appropriate.										
	84.2	98.9	88.9	100	71.4	71.4	100	50	100	100	100
Q8	The audit staff had adequate local government knowledge and awareness to assist them in performing the audit.										
	88.9	77.8	100	100	57.1	85.7	80	100	100	100	0
Q9	There was additional workload placed on LG staff during the conduct of the audit, beyond the tasks anticipated in the pre-audit preparation advice.										
	66.6	88.9	88.9	50	85.7	71.4	80	100	100	100	100
Q10	The Audit was completed in the scheduled timeframe.										
	88.9	65.5	100	100	85.7	42.9	80	100	100	100	0
Q11	The audit staff conducted themselves professionally during the audit.										
	94.4	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Q12	Consistent advice was received from both contract Auditors and the OAG.										
	94.4	100	100	100	100	71.4	100	100	100	100	0
Q13	The Auditor presented the final audit result to the Local Government in accordance with Section 7.12AD of the Local Government Act.										
	100	100	100	100	100	85.7	100	100	100	100	100
Q15	If your audit result included, or was likely to include, a significant finding, you were given appropriate information justifying the basis on which the finding was made.										
	100	88.9	90	100	83.3	100	100	0	100	100	100

Observations

- Armada Accountants & Advisors (1 X Class 4) achieved the lowest rating in 5 questions.
- RSM (5 X Class 2, 1 X Class 1, 1 X Class 3) achieved the lowest rating in questions 4, 10, 12, & 13.
- RSM achieved the only rating below 50% (Q10)

- William Buck Auditors (1 X Class2, 1 X Class 3, 2 X Class 4), Grant Thornton (3 X Class 1) and Lincoln's (3 X Class4) were most likely to impose additional work on LG staff.
- William Buck Auditors (1 X Class2, 1 X Class 3, 2 X Class 4) achieved the lowest rating in question 15, but was a single respondent LG.
- The best results were for Moore (2 X Class1, 3 X Class 2, 1 X Class 3, 1 X Class 4).

There are no particular findings in terms of the individual Audit Firms.

KEY ISSUES

The results and comments from the survey highlight an improving audit scenario in the sector when compared with last year's outcomes. The 2024 survey updates those findings in the following terms.

2023	2024
Timeframe and Delays	
Over 50% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that "the audit was completed in the scheduled timeframe". Comments from respondents suggested disruptions to the timeframe were caused by: - consecutive periods of leave taken by the Auditors and OAG staff; - difficulties with asset valuations, and; - collection of information. One respondent noted that the Auditors continually asked for more information from Local Government staff but refused to acknowledge the delays these requests were causing or allowing for any flexibility in the times allocated.	Satisfaction with the audit completion timeframes improved significantly, from 48% in last year's survey to 82% this year. Comments from respondents last year suggested disruptions to the timeframe were caused by: - consecutive periods of leave taken by the Auditors and OAG staff; - difficulties with asset valuations, and; - collection of information including Auditors continually asking for more information from Local Government staff but refusing to acknowledge the delays these requests were causing or allowing for any flexibility in the times allocated. Whilst problems are still evident in individual circumstances, it would seem that 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.

2023	2024
Additional workload on Local Government staff	
60% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that <i>"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"</i>. Only 15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Respondents noted that the tasks expected of Local Government staff <i>"far exceeded"</i> what was anticipated, and this led to a <i>"very high workload"</i> for staff and a strain on resources. Unclear instructions, poor communication and being asked to answer the same question multiple times were cited by respondents as causes for the additional workload.	In 2024 60% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that <i>"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"</i>. Only 15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Concerns remain 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 <i>"far exceeded"</i> what was anticipated, and this led to a <i>"very high workload"</i> for staff and a strain on resources. Last year unclear instructions, poor communication and being asked to answer the same question multiple times were cited by respondents as causes for the additional workload.

	Comments this year indicate that whilst the situation is improving in terms of multiple, repetitive information requests, the clarity of requests could be improved further.
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2023	2024
Cost	
Almost half of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that <i>“the estimated audit costs were reasonable, given the Audit Brief and the comparative cost of previous audits”</i>. Comments from some respondents reported that the costs were more than twice that incurred prior to the OAG assuming responsibility for Local Government auditing. There was also feedback about a lack of transparency from the OAG in its failure to provide a cost breakdown. In terms of the actual cost of the audit, only two respondents indicated that the final cost was less than the estimated cost, with a significant amount of respondents indicating the actual cost was higher than the estimate. The average difference between the estimated and actual was an increase of around \$12,000, with the biggest difference being \$40,000.	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. (Largest reduction: \$9,910 or 25.41%. Average reduction was 3.7% or \$2,900.) 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. (Largest increase: \$21,170. Average increase of 5.5% or \$6,755). The comments reveal concerns focussed on the transparency of costings and the justification of costs.

2023	2024
Asset Valuation Requirements	
There were a number of comments throughout the survey raising the need for simplification and clarification of the Fair Value asset valuation requirements. In response to question 11 about the consistency of advice from the contract auditors and the OAG, one respondent noted that the advice received was good <i>“apart from the issue of the valuation of assets”</i>. A similar comment appears in question 14 where a respondent has sought clarification and guidance about <i>“the timing of infrastructure revaluation and what mechanisms, beside management judgement, [are] in place to show how we have made the decision”</i>. Feedback on the handling of the asset valuation process can also be seen in a comment in question 8 which suggests that <i>“more thought needs to be given between the LG Sector and the OAG.”</i>	An outcome of our 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. There were a number of comments throughout the 2023 survey raising the need for simplification and clarification of the Fair Value asset valuation requirements. We were supported in this agenda by the OAG itself and there appears to have been some impact with far less comments being raised regarding fair value as an issue.

Conclusion

The survey results indicate an overall improvement in terms of a number of issues that arose during the first survey, particularly:

- The application of Fair Value within the audit context;
- Communication between contract auditors, the Office of the Auditor General, and local governments; and
- Timeframes and processes, with an apparent reduction in unnecessary delays and repetitive information requests.

Regardless of improvement, an effort needs to be maintained to continue to advance these issues and achieve higher levels of better practice by all players.

A number of other issues remain current and require continued advocacy, including:

- Audit costs, both in terms of total cost and also the transparency of those costs; and
- 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.

Significantly, no new issues appear to have emerged with the conduct of this year's survey.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY STATE COUNCILLORS (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)

Items Under Separate Cover to State Council only.

9 POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1 ENVIRONMENT POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

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:

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

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

9.2 GOVERNANCE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

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 scheduled to meet in mid June.

9.3 INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager Infrastructure

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.

9.4 PEOPLE AND PLACE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

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 Trail 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 and 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.

9.5 MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL (MWAC) REPORT

By Rebecca Brown, Manager, Waste and Environment

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.

10 MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION

10.1 2024-25 STATE AND FEDERAL BUDGET UPDATE

By Daniel Thomson, Manager Economics

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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.

ATTACHMENTS

- [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.

10.2 SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WA PRIORITY AREA DISCUSSION PAPERS

By Hannah Godsave, Acting Manager, Community Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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.

10.3 PERTH AND PEEL URBAN GREENING STRATEGY

By Melanie Davies, Urban Forest Program Facilitator

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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.

10.4 POLYPHAGOUS SHOT-HOLE BORER UPDATE

By Melanie Davies, Urban Forest Program Facilitator

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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.

10.5 FLYING MINUTE: SUBMISSION ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SECTOR ADAPTATION PLAN

By Simone Ruane, Project Lead, Emergency Management

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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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.

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

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

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.

10.6 FLYING MINUTE: STATE WAGE CASE SUBMISSION

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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.

10.7 FLYING MINUTE: SUBMISSION ON THE INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABILITY

By Daniel Thomson, Manager Economics

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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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 effective 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.

10.8 FLYING MINUTE: STANDARDISED MEETING PROCEDURES SUBMISSION

By James McGovern, Manager Governance and Procurement

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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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.

11 ORGANISATION REPORTS

11.1 KEY ACTIVITY REPORTS

11.1.1 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, ADVOCACY PORTFOLIO

By Rachel Horton, Executive Manager

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Advocacy Portfolio to the July 2024 State Council meeting.

The Advocacy Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Marketing*
- *Communications*
- *Media*
- *Events*

1. ADVOCACY

Following the State Council workshop in March 2024, work has commenced on WALGA's election policy platform and State election campaign. The Policy Platform will identify a broad range of sector priority issues to be addressed by the Government over the next four-year term and the public advocacy campaign will focus on a subset of issues that align with the key election issues for the community.

2. MARKETING

In April, WALGA officially launched its new brand. Whilst WALGA has a strong history of supporting the Local Government sector, the brand needed to look and feel contemporary and better represent who we are – subject matter experts that are professional, agile, and exude best practice in everything we do.

The supporting brand pillars 'Influence, Support and Expertise' work in conjunction with the design elements and are now woven through all communications as part of the brand refresh.

The new website also launched in April. As well as looking fresh and modern, the website has been built to industry best practice – exceeding in some areas.

For visitors to the website it presents a superior user experience, with a simplified structure (c.3,000 pages to 250), new features like predictive search, an integrated Preferred Supplier Panel portal, revamped training module, simplified data collection, and an upgraded media hub.

Promotion of the brand launch generated 84% of new visitors to the website. Enhanced website analytics will also provide greater visibility of campaign performance in future.

Following the brand refresh, the Marketing team will deliver an Employer Brand project, focussing on defining and rolling out the WALGA Employer Value Proposition (EVP).

Organisations that implement EVPs benefit in numerous ways, which is especially important in a tight labour market.

Campaigns

Ten campaigns were run throughout April and May to promote 17 WALGA Training courses to Member Councils, including;

- Certificate III in Local Government
- Diploma of Local Government (for Elected Members)
- Short Courses: i.e. Health and Safety Representative courses.

WALGA was a formal partner of Reconciliation WA throughout May 2024, including the high-profile National Reconciliation Week. WALGA was featured across all digital and printed communications and at the high-profile event at Optus Stadium, (attended by the Premier Hon Roger Cook MLA and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Mr Tony Buti MLA), plus the equivalent regional breakfasts held at five locations across WA.

3. COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

Media Coverage

Media monitoring recorded 222 mentions of WALGA and 'Local Government' in mainstream media throughout the reporting period.

The top three media outlets were ABC Radio Perth/ABC Regional (54 mentions), thewest.com.au (36 mentions) and 6PR Perth (15).

The top stories covered across Local Government were Urban Canopy, the WALGA Greening Grants, Housing, Rates Rises and the Halls Creek investigation.

Throughout April and May 2024, President Karen Chappel was mentioned 23 times in the mainstream media.

(Source: MyMedia)

2024/25 State Budget Communications

On May 10 WALGA shared a State Budget analysis to the sector through various channels about how the 2024/25 State Budget will impact Local Governments.

From both the Special Edition of LG Direct and the CEO email to Local Government CEOs, 304 contacts visited the State Budget page of the website. On average users viewed the State Budget pages 4.5 times, clearly returning for more information, and spent a total of 2.08 minutes on the budget section.

- The top three advocacy areas visited were disaster-relief, safer roads, and community infrastructure.
- The CEO State Budget email was the best performing communication, with an engagement rate of 63%.
- LinkedIn remains the best-performing social media channel, generating 1,314 impressions and an engagement rate of 6.93%, with 67 clicks, 22 reactions and 2 shares.

2024/25 Federal Budget Communications

On May 14 WALGA shared a Federal Budget analysis.

- The communications generated a 60% engagement rate with 287 users visiting the Federal Budget page of the website.

- On average, users spent 1.55 minutes on the Federal Budget page.
- The Federal Budget predictably generated less interest compared to the State Budget on social media, but still secured a significant engagement rate of 6.5% with 199 impressions 57 clicks, 17 reactions and 4 shares.

Media Releases

WALGA Communications published four Media Releases throughout April and May 2024:

- 2024 WA Tree Festival branches out into second week (12 April 2024)
- In a fire emergency, the badge you wear shouldn't matter (16 April 2024)
- WALGA welcomes changes to Long Service Leave (LSL) for LG employees (19 April 2024)
- WALGA response to State Budget 2024-25 (9 May 2024)

Other Communications publications/distributions

- 2024 LG Directory – 3,100 hard copies printed and distributed to 139 Member Councils and Preferred Suppliers. Also promoted through WALGA's social media channels.
- 8 weekly LG Direct newsletters to over 2,000 Elected Members and senior staff.
- Three LG Direct Special Editions - Regional Telecommunications Inquiry (10 April); State Budget Response (9 May) and Federal Budget Response (13 May).
- Western Councillor Magazine April 2024 – 3,100 hard copies distributed to Local Governments and stakeholders and electronic version available via the WALGA website.

Social Media

The below statistics cover the period from Tuesday, 26 March – Tuesday 28 May 2024, with comparison to the previous reporting period.

During this period, posts focused largely on WALGA initiatives. It is important to note that the nature of content can vary the level of engagement (for example periods with a high number of WALGA events/media releases on timely matters may see more engagement than day-to-day posts).

Key advocacy moments during this period include the State and Federal Budget response, Urban Greening Grants, National Volunteer Week and National Reconciliation Week which utilised video content.

LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram combined statistics

- 102 posts (4.1% increase)
- 48 post comments and replies (69.8% decrease)
- 1,528 post reactions and likes (31.1% decrease)
- Average post engagement rate of 6.18% (consistent)
- 4,944 video views (309% increase)

Facebook

f Top posts



Thank you to the City of Wanneroo for hosting WALGA's second State Council Meeting for the year yesterday. The meeting welcomed Chair of the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review, Hon Alannah MacTiernan.



On Wednesday 27 March, WALGA collaborated with the Kings Park and Botanic Garden to launch the WA Tree Festival (Tree Fest) for 2024. The launch featured celebrity horticultural experts Trevor Cochrane and Sue



(Post with no description)

Instagram

@ Top posts



Last week, WALGA hosted our annual Aboriginal Engagement Forum at the State Reception Centre, Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park). Returning in 2024 with an elevated look and feel, the event commenced with a



Thank you to the @cityofwanneroo for hosting WALGA's second State Council Meeting for the year yesterday. The meeting welcomed Chair of the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review, Hon Alannah MacTiernan.



On Wednesday 27 March, WALGA collaborated with the Kings Park and Botanic Garden to launch the WA Tree Festival (Tree Fest) for 2024. The launch featured celebrity horticultural experts Trevor Cochrane and Sue

LinkedIn

in Top posts



Last week, WALGA President Karen Chappel AM JP travelled to Canberra for the official opening of the WA Canberra Hub. Attended by WA Premier Roger Cook, Hon Hannah Beazley BA MLA, Hon David Michael MLA and



On Wednesday 27 March, WALGA collaborated with the Kings Park and Botanic Garden to launch the WA Tree Festival (Tree Fest) for 2024. The launch featured celebrity horticultural experts Trevor Cochrane and Sue



"I grew up in the Pilbara on Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Country and it's the place where I still feel the closest connection to Country." The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2024, Now More Than Ever, is a

LinkedIn Advocacy related posts

[3 April – Tree Festival](#)

[4 April – Canberra Hub visit](#)

[16 April – Media Release 'In a fire emergency, the badge you wear shouldn't matter'](#)

[30 April – Vape collection study](#)

[2 May – State Council Alannah MacTiernan visit](#)

[10 May – State Budget Response](#)

[14 May – Federal Budget Analysis](#)

[17 May – Round Two Urban Greening Grants](#)

[25 May – National Volunteer Week](#)

[27 May – National Reconciliation Week, CEO](#)

[28 May – National Reconciliation Week, President](#)

4. EVENTS

Planning for the 2024 WALGA Local Government Convention and Exhibition is now well advanced, with the theme, brand concept and program development completed. Exhibitor bookings launched in early April and delegate registrations will open mid-June.

A promotional campaign will focus on increasing attendance with increased storytelling on the key sessions. Other areas of improvement include enhancing the visitor experience with digital registration kiosks and on-demand lanyard printing, in-event activations as focal points throughout the venue and elevated session presentations to ensure the content has maximum impact.

Planning is also underway for the 2025 Urban Forest Conference, with WALGA partnering with Murdoch University for the venue.

11.1.2 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager Infrastructure

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Infrastructure Portfolio to the July 2024 State Council meeting.

The Infrastructure Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Roads*
- *Funding*
- *Urban and Regional Transport*
- *Utilities*
- *Road Safety*

The following outlines the activities of the Infrastructure Portfolio since the last State Council meeting.

1. ROADS

Local Government Transport and Roads Research and Innovation Program (LGTRRIP)

Practitioners guidelines for the use of crumbed rubber modified asphalts and sprayed seals, the use of Reclaimed asphalt pavement and design and construction guidance for the use of crushed recycled concrete, will be published over the next quarter. WALGA together with Main Roads and NTRO are currently developing the next cycle of projects to be prioritised for funding over the next two years. Local Governments are encouraged to submit project ideas via the LGTRRIP website.

Condition Assessment of Roads of Regional Significance

The condition assessment survey of significant roads in the South West region is nearing completion. All the collected data will be uploaded to the relevant LG data base and made available online to each of the LGs. The next stage will include the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne regions.

Road Rail Interface Agreements

Rail Interface Agreements are a requirement under the *Rail Safety National Law (WA) Act 2015*. A model *pro forma* agreement between Local Governments and Arc Infrastructure is nearing the end of negotiations and should be available for Local Government review and action soon. This agreement updates various elements of the existing agreements, particularly adding clarification on types of works and the responsibilities of both parties. Additionally, negotiations regarding Interface Agreements with the PTA are also nearing completion. As soon as these negotiations are complete, WALGA will liaise with each affected Local Government to provide advice around the new agreement.

Update of User Guides for calculating the cost of road wear for defined freight tasks

Due to recent escalation in road construction costs, WALGA has initiated an update of the unit rates that are used to underpin the methodologies in the User Guides for calculating the cost of road wear for defined freight tasks on sealed and unsealed roads. NTRO will be appointed to update the guides and to compile an online calculator.

2. FUNDING

State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement 2023/24 – 2027/28

Working groups have been established to progress implementation of the commitments made in the agreement in relation to:

1. Increasing application of the Safe System approach to the local road network,
2. Employment of Aboriginal people, and
3. Use of recycled materials in road construction and maintenance.

Each of these groups has held at least one meeting during the quarter.

Achievements of the State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement

To provide foundational data to demonstrate the need for and value of State Government road funding, the Infrastructure Team has commenced a project to generate spatial data and provide a visual record of the projects completed on Local Government roads using the Road Project Grant funding component of the State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement.

The initial phase is an evaluation of work completed through the 2018/19 – 2022/23 State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement. The Regional Road Group secretariat in each region has been requested for a list of projects completed using Road Project Grants in spreadsheet form. This data will then be collated and prepared as spatial data. Work on this project is expected to be completed in September/October 2024.

GIS Mapping of the Rural Road Safety Business Case Alignments

To support advocacy efforts to improve safety on Local Government roads, WALGA has commenced a project to map the alignments of the rural roads identified for improvement in the Rural Road Safety Business Case. Work on developing the maps is likely to be completed in early June 2024.

Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) Model Revisions

The WALGA Infrastructure Team has progressed the work to harmonise the MCA models used by Regional Road Groups to prioritise project proposals for funding under the Road Project Grant funding pool in the Goldfields-Esperance, Gascoyne, Kimberley, Wheatbelt, Great Southern, and South West regions. The proposed changes to the MCA models reflect the new focus areas of the State Roads Funds to Local Governments Agreement, while still allowing for flexibility to recognise the significant differences between regions.

3. TRANSPORT

Regional Freight Strategy

A new Regional Freight Strategy is being developed by the WA Department of Transport with WALGA represented on the project steering committee. Two extensive workshops have been held involving industry representatives. A further ten workshops in regional areas are being planned which will provide Local Governments a direct voice to articulate the strategic freight needs and opportunities in each area.

Bus Stop Infrastructure

A bus stop infrastructure partnership agreement between WALGA, on behalf of Local Governments, and the Public Transport Authority has been in place since 2018/19. WALGA has commenced a review of the current Agreement and has consulted a cross section of

Local Governments to inform negotiations with the PTA for a new Agreement. WALGA has had an initial meeting with the PTA and the first draft has been completed.

Active/Green Transport Discussion Paper

In response to receiving numerous reports and requests regarding Active Transport (AT) challenges and requirements, WALGA is considering establishing an advocacy position for AT. To facilitate this, WALGA is developing a comprehensive discussion paper covering all modes of Active Transport, including biking, walking, and scootering.

This discussion paper aims to provide an overview of the current state of AT infrastructure and facilities, ranging from physical features to existing policies. It will gather and analyse information about AT-related problems, requirements, and needs within Western Australia.

The development of the second part of this paper involves extensive consultation with Local Governments. This consultation process is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

4. UTILITIES

Underground Power

The Minister for Energy endorsed Guidelines for the Targeted Underground Power Program.

The Local Government working group met, with representatives from eleven Local Governments participating. Key matters discussed included:

- Cost escalations and risks to project support;
- Contributions from government departments and agencies;
- Cost recovery model options;
- Project development issues with Western Power

The State Government Targeted Underground Power Program Steering Committee held one meeting and a workshop to explore responses to rapid escalation in contractor pricing for projects.

Streetlighting

Western Power are required to prepare a Streetlighting Strategy by 30 June 2024. An initial survey of Local Government streetlighting requirements has been completed by consultants on behalf of Western Power and some workshops undertaken. The survey was well supported by Local Governments, which was pleasing given WALGA's persistent advocacy regarding the need to consult with the sector.

The length of time required by Western Power to undertake works, including providing new streetlights and changing existing lights, continues to be raised by Local Governments as a matter of concern.

5. ROAD SAFETY

RoadWise Councils

As at May 2024, there were sixty-five (65) Local Governments registered as a RoadWise Council. Forty-six or 71% registered with a Resolution of Council and nineteen or 29% via a Declaration. There is a spread of RoadWise Councils across all ten Regional Road Group regions. In terms of road safety activity, 76% (44) of registered RoadWise Councils recorded road safety activity between January and March 2024.

RoadWise Recognised

The RoadWise Recognised Advisory Committee met in February 2024. Points, which signify road safety actions undertaken, were allocated to 34 RoadWise Councils. The Points that were allocated reflected actions delivered across the different areas of the [RoadWise Framework](#). This then converted to Ribbons which were awarded in recognition of a holistic approach to road safety across governance, management, and operations. In this way, the allocation of Points and Ribbons is designed to encourage local road safety toward better and ultimately best practice.

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT

Road Assets and Expenditure Report Update Project

A scope of work was developed to evaluate the current Road Assets and Expenditure data collection and report preparation processes, identify options for improvement, and undertake an update of the processes and products produced in the Road Assets and Expenditure Report. Two submissions were received in response to an invitation to tender are currently being evaluated. This project will identify opportunities to streamline the data collection, support better data reporting and will ultimately result in a more intuitive and user-friendly interface to access the data. A contract is expected to be awarded in June 2024, with the initial scoping and information gathering element of the project completed in August 2024.

11.1.3 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, MEMBER SERVICES PORTFOLIO

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Member Services Portfolio to the July 2024 State Council meeting.

The Member Services Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Association and Corporate Governance*
- *Commercial Preferred Supplier Program*
- *Employee Relations*
- *Governance and Procurement*
- *Training*

The following outlines the activities of the Member Services Portfolio since the last State Council meeting.

1. COMMERCIAL

Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) Development

WALGA has commenced contracting 70 recommended suppliers from a tender released in February for new Preferred Suppliers across multiple Panels and Categories.

The next scheduled tender for Preferred Suppliers will be issued in August 2024. Members seeking to have suppliers invited to Tender for the WALGA Preferred Supplier Program should email commercial@walga.asn.au with their requests and endorsements.

A tender for Architectural Services has been released to market following an extensive phase of engagement and development. The tender has engaged 34 potential suppliers and will close on 9 July 2024.

A new category of supply for the Finance and Services Panel Managed Accounting and Corporate Services has been released to market. Several specialist providers have been invited into the process which has been developed in response to Member requests.

Sustainable Energy Project

The WALGA Sustainable Energy Project formally commenced on 1 April 2022 delivering aggregate energy purchases to 48 WALGA Members. Following eight completed quarters of the project the total estimated cost savings are approximately \$21.8 million and Carbon Offsets total approximately 67,800 tonnes.

WALGA conducted a tender to identify an Emissions Data Management System (EDMS) as a carbon reporting tool to support the current and future development of the WALGA Sustainable Energy Project. This process was undertaken in consultation with the WALGA facilitated Carbon Accounting Group. The solution is now being implemented to provide administrative efficiencies for the project.

A new steering committee and consultants have been engaged to support the procurement process that will shortly be released to market. The current contract reaches its term at the end of March 2025. An adopted strategy supports the phase two evolution of the project.

ARENA

The ARENA EV and Charging Infrastructure grant program is now operational, with 21 WALGA Members now sourcing 137 Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and 105 charging stations through the grant subsidy agreement. The project value is \$12.3m with subsidised funding of \$3.5m from ARENA and a further \$1m State Government contribution through DMIRS.

Ordering is underway and the first ARENA milestone report and funding tranche is under distribution. Further opportunities are being sought to enhance the EV transition within the sector.

2. GOVERNANCE & PROCUREMENT

Local Government Elections

WALGA's governance staff are conducting a review of Local Government elections for the period 2015-2023. This includes examining the cost of conducting elections.

Several Zones had raised concerns with the election process and the cost. We are currently waiting on the WAEC election report for October 2023 to be completed and then the report will be finalised.

A report, together with proposals for an alternative engagement strategy that provides for an independent assessment of WALGA's election advocacy will be prepared. This report will be provided to the August/September round of Zone and State Council meetings.

Guidance document for Council Members considering State or Federal candidacy

With the Western Australian State election to be held in March 2025 and a Federal Election to take place within the next year, WALGA has developed a guidance document for Council Members considering participation in State or Federal politics.

With a focus on the ongoing responsibilities of the Council Member role, the document identifies relevant requirements under the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations) 2021*.

The document also highlights and discusses possible scenarios and matters for consideration in managing these responsibilities.

3. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

WA Industrial Relations Commission applications

WALGA ER has been representing the sector in a number of applications regarding the State awards in the WA Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC). These matters include the following:

- Application APPL 80 of 2023 – The Western Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union of WA (WASU) and the Local Government, Racing and Cemeteries Employees Union (WA) (LGRCEU) filed an application to increase the wages in the Municipal Employees (Western Australia) Award 2021 (ME Award). If the WASU and LGRCEU are successful, wages in the ME Award will increase for the

highest level by \$285.68 per week or 25.15%. WALGA will act in this matter by representing those Local Governments named to the ME Award which have instructed WALGA to act as an industrial agent in their interests. This matter has been listed for conciliation on 31 May 2024.

- Applications APPL 3 and 4 of 2023 – WALGA is responding to claims from the WASU for additional entitlements in the Local Government Officers' (Western Australia) Award 2021 (LGO Award) and the ME Award. This matter has not yet been listed for a hearing, but the WASU sought discovery of documents from Local Governments and WALGA. A discovery order was made, however this order is presently stayed pending WALGA's appeal. The appeal (FBA 4 and 5 of 2024) was heard on 24 May 2024, we await a decision.
- Applications APPL 26 and 27 of 2023 – The decisions in these matters resulted in the Commission retaining a number of facilitative clauses in the State awards which will assist Local Government employers and employees agree on work arrangements to suit individual employee circumstances. A few amendments have been made to the ME Award and the LGO Award as a result of the decisions, including the obligation that employers must pay employees within two days of the last day of a pay cycle. APPL 27 of 2023 (which deals with the ME Award) included a variation to address wages which are below the minimum wage, this application is adjourned pending the outcome of APPL 80 of 2023.
- Application APPL 6 of 2024 – The LGRCEU has filed an application to increase the industry allowance in the ME Award (clause 19.5) from \$21.82 to \$34.82 for compensation for disabilities on construction and maintenance work. Local Governments had until 5 April 2024 to respond to this claim. Three Local Governments were granted leave to intervene in this matter. The matter was heard on 27 May 2024 and the WAIRC ordered that the application be determined on the papers. Any party wishing to file written submissions or documents they seek to rely upon in relation to the application may do so until 17 June 2024.
- Application 90 of 2024 – The LGRCEU has applied to insert a disciplinary procedure clause into the ME Award. WALGA intends to intervene in this application so that we may contest it.
- Application CICS 5, 8 and 9 of 2023 - Union demarcation dispute. In response to sector feedback, WALGA successfully applied to intervene in these applications. These applications relate to a dispute over coverage of Local Government employees between three unions, the WASU, LGRCEU and the CFMEUW. Essentially the WASU is seeking an order that it cover Local Government outside employees to the exclusion of the CFMEUW. The matter is listed for hearing for four weeks from 15 to 24 July and 29 July to 9 August 2024.

WALGA Salary and Workforce Survey 2023

The survey results have been released and are available via the WALGA Salary and Workforce Survey online portal. Local Governments who have completed the survey or purchased access to the portal can view the survey report and the results in the online dashboard. A webinar outlining key results was held in March and is available on our website.

People and Culture Seminar

WALGA's annual People & Culture Seminar will be hosted on Friday, 19 July 2024 with the theme 'Enhancing workplace culture in times of change'. It will be held at the Perth Convention Centre. Registrations are now open.

With union movement and legislation changes occurring rapidly over the last year, the event will provide an opportunity to come together from across Western Australia to network and connect with peers and industry experts including:

- Hon Hannah Beazley, Minister for Local Government; Youth; Minister Assisting the Minister for Training and Workplace Development
- Dr Paula Smith - CEO, Global Institute of Training and Presenting
- Margit Mansfield - CEO, Keogh Consulting
- Cherry McNicol- Executive Manager Human Resources, Town of Port Hedland
- Kathy Hoare - Director State Workforce Planning, Department of Training and Workforce Development, and
- Sarah Collins - Project Officer, Living Proud LGBTIQ+ Community Services of WA
- Philippa Lonnie, Principal and Director, Greenshoots Consulting
- Renae Harding, Partner Jackson McDonald

Long Service Leave – new regulations

On 22 April 2024 the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) announced the regulations for Local Government long service leave (LSL) have been modernised. The substantive parts of the new LSL regulations will not commence operation until 1 September 2024.

On Tuesday 30 April 2024, the DLGSC hosted a webinar to introduce the new LSL regulations and answered some questions, a recording of the webinar is available on the DLGSC's website.

In preparation for the commencement of the new LSL regulations WALGA and the DLGSC will host a joint webinar in July or August this year. The webinar will focus on addressing questions from Local Governments.

4. TRAINING

Elected Member Training

Since the Local Government Elections in October 2023, many Elected Members have undertaken their required training and learners are very satisfied with the updated Council Member Essentials learning program. The Diploma of Local Government – Elected Members welcomed a new class at our May intake, and we are already taking enrolments for the next intake in September. The Jacqui Dodd Scholarship is now open and Elected Members can now apply until the 27 of June. Information can be found on the website - <https://walga.asn.au/our-services/training/elected-member-courses/nationally-recognised-training/jacqui-dodd-scholarship>.

Professional Development for Elected Members continues to be popular, in particular for newly Elected Members who completed their Council Member Essentials training.

Officer Training

Enrolments have been steadily increasing and our continued effort to regularly update our course resources to reflect legislative changes is well received by participants.

Brand new course offerings

In the background, our highly specialised course development teams have been busy at work, developing specialised technical yet practical new short course options to support the sector undergoing an everchanging legislative environment.

Offering updated course materials and ongoing professional development on a regular basis is a very important value proposition to our members. As part of our mission, WALGA endeavours to support Local Government staff in their daily work roles through our latest course offerings including:

- Procurement Request Development (Quotes and Tenders)
- Report Writing for Informed Decision Making
- Delegation and Authorisation – Essentials
- Prevent Sexual Harassment & Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace (Senior Leaders' Workshop)
- Active Bystanders (Train the Trainer)

LGA30120 Certificate III in Local Government

The Cert III in Local Government program is currently our prime focus and priority to promote. In collaboration with the marketing team, we have refined our marketing strategy to ensure the correct information is available to decision makers such as HR officer, supervisors or CEO's for smaller Local Governments. During the People and Culture seminar, guest speakers will highlight the journey, reward and successes of program and the importance for Local Governments to invest into their local talents pool and invest into career development opportunities for their staff. Our next intake commences mid-July 2024 it is recommended that Local Governments register their interest early ahead of time to ensure WALGA Training can offer a training place.

11.1.4 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, POLICY PORTFOLIO

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Policy Portfolio to the July 2024 State Council meeting.

The Policy Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Economics*
- *Environment and Waste*
- *Planning and Building*
- *Emergency Management*
- *Community*

The following outlines the activities of the Policy Portfolio since the May 2024 State Council meeting.

1. ECONOMICS

Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability (Agenda [Item 10.7](#) refers)

WALGA has lodged its submission to the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability with the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport. WALGA also provided input into ALGA's Submission. WALGA will appear before the Committee on Friday, 7 June 2024 in Canberra.

State and Federal Budgets (Agenda [Item 10.1](#) refers)

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.

WALGA also provided members with an [overview and analysis of the Federal Budget](#), which was handed down on Tuesday, May 14. On May 24, 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.

2. ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE

Dry Season Taskforce

WALGA CEO Nick Sloan is a member of the 2024 Drought Taskforce convened in April by the State Government to help address the impacts of challenging seasonal conditions on farmers and communities across the State. The Taskforce is chaired by Rob Cossart, Chief Executive Officer of the Wheatbelt Development Commission with representatives from State Government departments and agricultural industries. The State Government has announced an \$8.6 million funding support package, including an expansion of the Community Water Supply Partnership Program.

On 23 May, WALGA hosted a webinar to provide information to Local Governments on the work of the Dry Season Taskforce, the expanded Community Water Supply Partnership Program and the Water Deficiency Declaration process.

Wheatbelt Waste & Environment Summit

On Thursday, 30 May and Friday, 31 May 70 delegates gathered in Northam to discuss the key waste and environment challenges and solutions for the Wheatbelt region. These annual regional events provide an opportunity to showcase local initiatives as well as encouraging senior Government representatives and staff to visit regional areas and hear directly from Local Government.

The opening address was provided by Hon Darren West, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Energy; Environment; Climate Action and both Mia Carbon, Deputy Director General, Sustainability and Biosecurity, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, and Emily Briggs, Deputy Director General, Climate and Sustainability, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, provided updates on their portfolios.

Release of the draft State Waste Strategy and Waste Infrastructure Plan

The Draft State Waste Strategy was released on Wednesday 29 May for a 12 week consultation period (Submission due 21 August). WALGA has requested, and received, an extension to the deadline to allow a Submission to be considered at the September State Council meeting. The State Waste Infrastructure Plan has also been released. This Plan is a high level infrastructure needs analysis for the State.

Meeting with Minister for Energy; Environment; Climate Action

WALGA had a productive meeting Minister Whitby on Friday, 31 May 2024 to discuss progress with the Urban Greening Grant Program, Polyphagous shot-hole borer response and recovery, the Release of the Draft Waste Strategy, reform of the native regulation clearing permit process and the need for the State Government to develop a framework for Local Government/community engagement and benefit sharing as part of the energy transition and decarbonisation of the WA economy.

3. PLANNING AND BUILDING

Urban Greening Grants

The Urban Greening Grant Program provides \$3.75 million (ex GST) to support additional tree and understorey planting for the 33 Local Governments located in the Boorloo (Perth) and Bindjareb (Peel) regions. Round 1 awarded \$591,839 to 12 Local Governments. \$2.8m is available for Round 2, to support planting in the winter of 2025. Round 2 opened in early May and closes on Friday, 28 June 2024.

Polyphagous Shothole Borer Advocacy (Agenda Item xx refers)

WALGA hosted a Local Government CEO Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB) Roundtable with DPIRD on Thursday, 16 May 2024 attended by approximately 20 Local Governments from within and directly adjoining 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, and
3. The need to also turn our attention to recovery immediately.

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

WALGA has written to the Premier seeking a meeting to discuss with these concerns and has met with the Minister for Environment and the Planning Minister's Chief of Staff.

STRA Planning Regulations – Information Session

WALGA held a Planning Regulations (Short Term Rental Accommodation) Information Session on Monday, 15 April 2024 where the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) briefed the sector on proposed amendments to the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015* regarding Short Term Rental Accommodations.

50 officers from 32 Local Governments attended the session. The information gathered assisted WALGA in the formulation of its submission of the draft Regulations.

4. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

State Emergency Management Committee

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on Wednesday, 8 May 2024 attended by WALGA Executive Manager, Policy, Nicole Matthews. SEMC Communiques are available [here](#).

WALGA 2023 Emergency Management Survey

In late 2023, a total of 102 Local Governments responded to the 2023 [Local Government Emergency Management Survey](#), meeting WALGA's target of 75 per cent. The 2023 Survey results provide critical information to underpin WALGA's Emergency Management policy and advocacy work.

A webinar was held on 11 April 2024 summarising the results and key findings from the 2023 survey. A copy of the webinar recording is available [here](#).

5. COMMUNITY

Aboriginal Affairs

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

WALGA facilitated an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Survey Program webinar, hosted by DPLH on Friday, 7 June. The webinar provided an overview of the ten-year Heritage Survey Program, which aims to support eligible applicants to fund Aboriginal heritage surveys on unsurveyed or high-priority areas of the State.

WALGA is assisting to convene an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Roundtable for the Avon-Midland Country Zone on Friday, 21 June 2024 and the Goldfields-Esperance Country Zone for late July. These sessions follow a similar roundtable held with the Gascoyne Country Zone in February and aim to gain a shared understanding of the requirements under the amended *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and foster working relationships between Local Governments and regional representatives of DPLH.

National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week ran from 27 May – 3 June 2024 with the theme 'Now More Than Ever'. WALGA partnered with Reconciliation WA in the delivery of a program of events across the State. WALGA staff participated in the Walk for Reconciliation and CEO Nick Sloan and staff also recorded an Acknowledgement of Country that can be viewed [here](#).

Commencement of Stage 5A of the *Public Health Act 2016*

Stage 5A of the *Public Health Act 2016* commenced on 4 June 2024. Local Governments are required to develop and maintain Local Public Health Plans that are consistent with the State Public Health Plan by 4 June 2026. Two Department of Health information webinars were held during May.

WALGA is working with State Government to ensure ongoing engagement with the sector on State plan priorities, the development of a Local Government Guide and to advocate for support and funding for the development and implementation of Local Public Health Plans. WALGA has established a Public Health Plans Reference Group to support advocacy development.

11.2 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

11.3 CEO'S REPORT

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

12 ADDITIONAL ZONE RESOLUTIONS

To be advised following Zone meetings.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the WALGA State Council will be held in the Boardroom at WALGA, ONE70, LV1, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville on 4 September 2024 commencing at 4.15pm.

14 CLOSURE

STATUS REPORT ON STATE COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
10 May 2024 Flying Minute Submission for the 2024 State Wage Case	That the WALGA 2024 State Wage Case submission be endorsed. RESOLUTION 240.FM/2024	WALGA submission lodged 14 May 2024. Included in July State Council Agenda as an item for noting (see Item 10.6)	May 2024	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
9 May 2024 Flying Minute Submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability	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. RESOLUTION 239.FM/2024	WALGA submission lodged 31 May 2024. Included in July State Council Agenda as an item for noting (see Item 10.7)	May 2024	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
1 May 2024 Item 7.1 Waste Levy Advocacy Position	1. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy (the Levy) was established in WA to fund programs relating to the management, reduction, reuse, recycling, monitoring or measurement of waste and administering the fund. The current Levy is applied to waste generated, or landfilled, in the Perth metropolitan area. Currently, only 25% of the collected funds are retained for strategic waste management activities, 75% are allocated to the ongoing operations of the Department responsible for administration of the Levy.	The Advocacy Positions Manual has been updated.	May 2024	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	2. Local Government considers that: 1. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy <u>(the Levy)</u> funds must be fully hypothecated to strategic waste management activities in line with the State Waste Strategy <u>including focus on priority materials such as organic waste.</u> 2. <u>The Levy funds must not</u> be used for non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities. 3. Strategic waste management activities funded by the State Government should: a. Provide adequate funding and support for Regional Councils, non-metropolitan and metropolitan Local Governments; b. Reflect the targets and priorities within the Waste Strategy; c. Fully fund and acknowledge the life cycle costs of infrastructure and services; and d. Facilitate the development, implementation and ongoing operation of Product Stewardship Schemes. 4. The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area as it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for			

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change. 5. The Levy should not be applied to waste received at premises undertaking licensed activities whose primary purpose is resource recovery. 6. The Levy must be supported by a clear, evidence-based rationale to demonstrate the suitability of how charges are set, how and where funds are allocated, and the extent to which it is delivering on its objectives. 7. <u>The Levy must be supported by a comprehensive regulatory regime for activities that are, or should be, licenced.</u> RESOLUTION 025.2/2024			
1 May 2024 Item 7.2 Association Constitution Proposed Amendments	That State Council note the update on proposed amendments to the Association Constitution to: 1. primarily, allow WALGA to be in a position to apply to be registered as an organisation of employers under the <i>Industrial Relations Act 1979</i> (WA); and 2. make some changes to address inconsistencies and modernise terminology. RESOLUTION 026.2/20214	An item is being prepared for State Council consideration at the July State Council.		Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
1 May 2024 Item 7.3 Submission on the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability	That: 1. 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. RESOLUTION 028.2/2024	The submission was updated by the working party and distributed for endorsement by State Council via Flying Minute. The endorsed submission was lodged on 31 May 2024. Included in July State Council Agenda as an item for noting (see Item 10.7).	May 2024	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
1 May 2024 Item 7.4 Submissions to Regional Telecommunications Reviews and Inquiries	That State Council: 1. Endorse the attached submission to the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review. 2. Endorse the attached submission to the Public Administration Committee Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications in Western Australia. RESOLUTION 029.2/2024	WALGA submission to the Public Administration Committee Inquiry lodged on Thursday, 2 May. Some hearings have been scheduled for telecommunications providers and electricity distributors during June. WALGA Submission to the Federal Regional Telecommunications Review was submitted on Monday, 6 May 2024.	May 2024	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure
1 May 2024 Item 7.5 WALGA Submission –	That State Council endorse the submission on the proposed amendments to the <i>Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015</i> related to Short-Term Rental Accommodation.	WALGA submission lodged with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on 1 May 2024	May 2024	Nicole Matthews

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
Draft Local Planning Scheme Regulations 2015 (Short-Term Rental Accommodation)	RESOLUTION 030.2/2024			Executive Manager Policy
1 May 2024 Item 7.8 Selection Committee Minutes – 16 April 2024 and 17 April 2024	That: 1. the resolution contained in the 16 April 2024 Selection Committee Minutes be noted; and 2. the recommendations contained in the 16 April 2024 Selection Committee Minutes and 17 April 2024 Selection Committee Special Meeting Minutes be endorsed. RESOLUTION 033.2/2024	Selection Committee items have been actioned.	May 2024	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
18 April 2024 Flying Minute Submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP)	That State Council endorse WALGA's submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) be provided to the State Emergency Management Committee. RESOLUTION 238.FM/2024	WALGA submission lodged and included in July State Council Agenda as an item for noting (see Item 10.5)	May 2024	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
6 December 2023 Item 7.1	That the following resolutions from the 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the appropriate Policy Team for further work to be undertaken	That the Environment Policy Team met on 16 February 2024 and determined:	Complete	Nicole Matthews

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
2023 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	... 5.1 Local Governments' representation at the State Administrative Tribunal relating to planning matters within its district <i>That WALGA lobby the State Government for legislative reform to enable Local Governments the automatic right to be a represented party at all State Administrative Tribunal hearings related to planning matters within its district.</i> RESOLUTION 501.5/2023	That the Environment Policy Team: 1. Note the 2023 AGM resolution, that WALGA lobby the State Government for legislative reform to enable Local Governments the automatic right to be a represented party at all State Administrative Tribunal hearings related to planning matters within its district. 2. Note that the AGM resolution is consistent with the intent of WALGA Advocacy Position 6.3 Third Party Appeal Rights, and 6.4 Development Assessment Panels. 3. Requests that WALGA continue to pursue advocacy consistent with these positions as part of the Planning reform process. The WALGA Secretariat supports in principle the motion and notes that the DAP Advocacy Position is scheduled for review later in 2024. Proposals such as those raised by the Shire of Toodyay will be considered during this review.		Executive Manager Policy

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
6 December 2023 Item 7.1 2023 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	That the following resolutions from the 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the appropriate Policy Team for further work to be undertaken ... 5.2 Land Use Policy <i>That WALGA establish and promote policies to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land.</i> RESOLUTION 501.5/2023	Following the Environment Policy Team's consideration of WALGA's Research Paper at its February meeting, WALGA met with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to discuss progress with the various initiatives being undertaken at a State level to prioritise agricultural land. The WALGA Secretariat will provide the Environment Policy Team with an update and draft advocacy position for consideration in July, with a view to inclusion in the September 2024 State Council agenda.		Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
6 December 2023 Item 7.1 2023 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	That the following resolutions from the 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the appropriate Policy Team for further work to be undertaken. 5.4 Regional and Remote Housing <i>That WALGA advocates to the WA State and Commonwealth Governments to address the dire shortage of affordable key worker family housing options in regional</i>	Ongoing		Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<i>and remote towns to encourage families to live and work in regional and remote towns. Social housing is addressed at both the State and Federal levels.</i> RESOLUTION 501.5/2023			
1 March 2023 Item 7.4 Submission on Draft Guideline Minimising Noise Impact from Outdoor Community Basketball Facilities	That WALGA: - Note that the Environment Minister has withdrawn the Draft Guideline: Minimising noise impact from outdoor community basketball. - Write to the Ministers for Environment, Local Government, Sport and Planning requesting the formation of a cross Government working group, including relevant representative bodies, to consider and develop solutions to balance urban density and infill, public recreation and noise management. RESOLUTION 422.1/2023	Update sought from the Minister's office on 1 June 2024.	Ongoing	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
7 December 2022 Item 5.1 2022 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	The following resolutions from the 2022 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the relevant Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: ... 3.1 Road Traffic Issues <i>That WALGA advocate on behalf of the local government sector to the State Government and in particular, Main Roads, to increase importance and weight given to local knowledge and input regarding</i>	The Infrastructure Policy Team resolved: <i>That efforts to increase the importance given to Local Government knowledge regarding traffic issues be deferred for consideration in mid-2023 after a clear Local Government advocacy position</i>	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<i>road traffic issues including requests for speed reduction, intersection treatments and overall preventative and traffic safety measures.</i> RESOLUTION 394.8/2022	<i>on speed management is developed and endorsed.</i> This matter is central to the new Speed Management Policy adopted by State Council in May 2023. Implementation strategy being considered.		
7 December 2022 Item 5.1 2022 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	The following resolutions from the 2022 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the relevant Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: ... 3.2 Car Parking and Traffic Congestion Around Schools <i>That WALGA engages with the State Government on behalf of Local Government to review issues associated with car parking and traffic congestion around school sites including but not limited to:</i> <i>1. Reviewing car parking standards for schools;</i> <i>2. Ensuring sufficient land is set aside for the provision of parking on school sites;</i> <i>3. Reviewing the co-location of schools to avoid issues being exacerbated;</i> <i>4. Restricting school access from major roads;</i> <i>5. Developing plans to enable schools to manage school traffic;</i> <i>6. Develop programs to educate drivers; and</i>	The Infrastructure Policy Team resolved: <i>That WALGA uses its role at the Safe Active Travel to School Working Group to advocate for these outcomes and provide advice back to the Local Government sector.</i>	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<i>7. Develop options and implement initiatives to encourage alternative modes of transport to school.</i> RESOLUTION 394.8/2022			
7 December 2022 Item 5.1 2022 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	The following resolutions from the 2022 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the relevant Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: 3.3 Proposal for Regional Road Maintenance Contracts with Main Roads WA <i>That WALGA assist Local Governments and work with the Hon Minister Rita Saffioti to introduce a similar program that is currently in play in Queensland and introduce a sole invitee Program for Local Governments to engage in a Road Maintenance Performance Contract with Main Roads WA.</i> RESOLUTION 394.8/2022	The Infrastructure Policy Team resolved: <i>That the opportunities and interest in contracting Local Governments to undertake maintenance and minor works on the State road network be explored in discussion with Main Roads WA.</i>	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure
7 December 2022 Item 5.1 2022 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	The following resolutions from the 2022 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the relevant Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: ... 3.4 Northern Australia Beef Roads Program <i>That WALGA work with the Hon Madeleine King MP Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern</i>		Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<i>Australia to make Beef Road Funding available to all Australian Local Governments north and south, or establish a Southern Australia Beef Road Funding Program to allow for equitable support across Australia's beef and agriculture industries.</i> RESOLUTION 394.8/2022			
1 December 2021 Item 5.3 2021 Annual General Meeting	That the following resolutions from the 2021 WALGA Annual General Meeting be endorsed for action: Cost of Regional Development <i>That WALGA makes urgent representation to the State Government to address the high cost of development in regional areas for both residential and industrial land, including the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks, which has led to market failure in many regional towns.</i> ... RESOLUTION 294.7/2021	In March the State Government announced the establishment of a new Infrastructure Development Fund that includes a stream to support the delivery of regional worker accommodation with applications open until September 2024. This is an infrastructure investment program to address infrastructure constraints in the water, wastewater and electricity network at a precinct or strategic site scale impacting the delivery of regional worker accommodation. Full details can be found here.	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure