

State Council Full Minutes 2 July 2025

Ordinary meeting no. 3 of 2025 of the Western Australian Local Government Association State Council held at ONE70, LV3, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville at 4:15pm.

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1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

The Chair declared the meeting open at 4:18pm.

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 Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Great Eastern 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 Phillip Blight Cr Helen Sadler President Paige McNeil Cr Haeden Miles President Cr Laurene Bonza Cr Stephen Strange President David Menzel (Deputy) President Cr Les Price Cr Michael Dudek Cr Lewis Hutton Cr Bronwyn Smith President Cr Liz Sudlow Mayor Caroline Knight Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks Mayor Patrick Hall Mayor Terresa Lynes Mayor Logan Howlett JP Cr Karen Wheatland Cr Barry Winmar President Cr Tony Dean
Secretariat	Chief Executive Officer Executive Director Member Services Executive Manager Infrastructure Executive Manager Policy Executive Manager Advocacy Chief Financial Officer Manager Association and Corporate Governance	Mr Nick Sloan Mr Tony Brown Mr Ian Duncan Ms Nicole Matthews Ms Rachel Horton Mr Rick Murray Ms Kathy Robertson
1.3 APOLOGIES		
Members	Great Southern Country Zone Great Southern Country Zone Kimberley Country Zone Gascoyne Country Zone	Cr Scott Crosby Mayor Greg Stocks (Deputy) President Chris Mitchell JP President Eddie Smith
Ex Officio	The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor – City of Perth Local Government Professionals WA President	Deputy Lord Mayor, Cr Bruce Reynolds Mr Anthony Vuleta

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

Nil

4 MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE STATE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 7 MAY 2025

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio

Seconded: Cr Karen Wheatland

That the Minutes of the WALGA State Council meeting held on [7 May 2025](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

RESOLUTION 035.3/2025

CARRIED

4.1.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE STATE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 7 MAY 2025

Nil.

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.

- Mayor Caroline Knight declared an interest in item 8.2 State Development Applications and Decision Making Advocacy Position.
- President Cr Tony Dean declared an interest in item 8.6 Selection Committee Minutes – 17 June 2025.

6 EX OFFICIO REPORTS

6.1 CITY OF PERTH REPORT

Deputy Lord Mayor, Cr Bruce Reynolds, was an apology for the meeting.

6.2 LG PROFESSIONALS REPORT

Mr Anthony Vuleta, President, LG Professionals WA, was an apology for the meeting.

7 EMERGING ISSUES

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

Nil.

8 MATTERS FOR DECISION

8.1 SUSPENSION AND DISQUALIFICATION FOR OFFENCES ADVOCACY POSITION

By Jason Russell, Senior Governance Specialist

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

1. That WALGA amend and rename advocacy position 2.5.5 *Disqualification Due to Conviction* to read as follows:

Suspension and Disqualification for Offences

The WA Local Government sector advocates that:

1. ***A new disqualification criterion should be added to the Local Government Act 1995 that disqualifies a person from serving as an Elected Member if they have been convicted of an offence against the Planning and Development Act, or the Building Act in the preceding five years.***
 2. ***A new suspension criterion should be added to the Local Government Act 1995 allowing the Minister of Local Government to suspend a Council Member charged with an offence, where the Minister is satisfied this would be in the best interests of the Local Government, based on advice of the Director General.***
2. That WALGA incorporate advocacy on this issue into its ongoing legislative reform engagement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The South East Metropolitan Zone (SEMZ) passed a motion requesting that WALGA advocate for additional powers for the Minister to suspend Council Members charged with criminal offences likely to damage the reputation of the Local Government, and disqualify if convicted.
- Suspension, dismissal and disqualification must balance the public interest in elected representatives of good character, with protections for the individual and respect for democratic processes.
- While the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) includes a range of suspension, dismissal and disqualification mechanisms, their operation also depends on how the relevant decision-makers choose to use their powers.
- This report recommends that the dismissal mechanisms under the Act are sufficient to address the Zone's concern, but that WALGA's advocacy position be amended to include an additional suspension power for the Minister of Local Government.
- The Governance Policy Team endorsed the advocacy position at its meeting on 19 May.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Influence:

- Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.

Support:

- Provide practical sector-wide solutions based on research and evidence.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The current Advocacy Position 2.5.5 Disqualification Due to Conviction position provides as follows:

Position Statement: A new disqualification criterion should be added to the *Local Government Act 1995* that disqualifies a person from serving as an Elected Member if they have been convicted of an offence against the *Planning and Development Act*, or the *Building Act* in the preceding five years.

Background: A planning or building system conviction is potentially more serious than a *Local Government Act* conviction because of Local Government's prominent role in planning and building control and the significant personal benefits which can be illegally gained through these systems.

This report recommends that this position is renamed and amended to include an additional point 2, as follows:

Suspension and Disqualification for Offences

The WA Local Government sector advocates that:

1. *A new disqualification criterion should be added to the Local Government Act 1995 that disqualifies a person from serving as an Elected Member if they have been convicted of an offence against the Planning and Development Act, or the Building Act in the preceding five years.*
2. *A new suspension criterion should be added to the Local Government Act 1995 allowing the Minister of Local Government to suspend a Council Member charged with an offence, where the Minister is satisfied this would be in the best interests of the Local Government, based on advice of the Director General.*

BACKGROUND

At its November 2024 meeting, the SEMZ asked WALGA to advocate:

That the Local Government Act 1995 be amended to give the Minister for Local Government the power to:

1. *Disqualify a person from membership of a council if the person has been convicted of a criminal offence that, in the opinion of the Minister for Local Government, under the advice of the State Solicitor's Office, has the potential to damage the reputation of the local government or the local government sector more broadly.*
2. *Suspend the council member who is charged with a criminal offence that has the potential to damage the reputation of the local government or the local government sector more broadly, until the charges are dealt with; and*
3. *Require a person to be paid fees and allowances until they are disqualified.*

COMMENT

The *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) automatically disqualifies someone from membership of a Council if convicted of certain types of offences. The Act also includes mechanisms for suspending and dismissing Council Members. Each mechanism differs in terms of the parties, processes, powers, and preconditions involved.

While suspended, a Council Member cannot perform any of the powers and duties of their role. Suspension does not affect the duration of a Council Member's term or their eligibility to be a candidate for election to Council. If a Council Member is dismissed, the office of the member becomes vacant from the time when the order dismissing the member takes effect. A Council Member that is dismissed is not prevented from standing in future elections. In contrast, persons disqualified are ineligible to hold or be elected to office as a Council Member.

It is necessary for these mechanisms to balance the public interest in ensuring that elected representatives are of good character, with protections for due process, the presumption of innocence and resumption of rights following completion of a sentence. There must also be an appropriate level of respect for the democratic process and the rights of communities to choose their representatives.

Whether the suspension, dismissal and disqualification framework is fit-for-purpose depends on the legislative framework (e.g. legislative settings for disqualification, powers and constraints on powers to suspend and dismiss) and its implementation (e.g. how decision-makers exercise their discretion to intervene).

Existing Disqualification Provisions

A person may be disqualified from membership of a Council based on the following provisions of the Act:

Provision	A person is disqualified –
2.20	If they are a member of a parliament
2.21	If they are a bankrupt or their affairs are under insolvency laws
2.22	Because of conviction
2.23	If they are a member of another Council
2.24	Because of misapplication of local government funds or property
5.117	If SAT orders disqualification (for not more than 5 years) for serious or recurrent breach, or failure to comply with order

Section 2.22 of the Act provides that a person is disqualified if:

- they have been convicted of a crime and are in prison serving a sentence for that crime,
- have been convicted of a serious local government offence in the previous 5 years, or
- have been convicted of an offence carrying an indictable penalty of imprisonment for more than 5 years.

Clearly, the threshold for disqualification is high, excluding all lower-level offences and even indictable offences with a penalty of 5 years or less. As an example, high-level indecent assault will be dealt with as an indictable offense, with the offender liable for up to 5 years imprisonment. Serious local government offences are offences against the Act for which a person may be sentenced to imprisonment or a fine of over \$10,000. A court sentencing a person for a serious local government offence may make an order waiving the disqualification, or reducing the period for which it applies.

There is currently no ability for the Minister to disqualify a person from Council membership. SAT has discretion to order disqualification in some circumstances, while a court has the authority to order that disqualification not apply. In the context of these judicial or quasi-judicial processes, there are strong protections for the rights of the affected person. This reflects the seriousness of this penalty. While the SEMZ motion calls for disqualification, dismissal may be a more appropriate penalty if the exercise of Ministerial discretion is required.

Current Dismissal Provisions

Under sections 8.15K and 8.15L of the Act, the Minister may recommend that the Governor dismiss a Council Member, if the Minister is satisfied that it is appropriate to intervene. The Minister must be satisfied based on the Director General's written advice that:

- the member is impeding the Local Government's ability to perform its functions and duties under the Act, and/or
- it is in the best interest of the Local Government that the member be dismissed.

The Minister must also be satisfied that the seriousness of the situation for the Local Government requires intervention.

The Minister must give the member:

- a report that includes their proposed recommendation and grounds for the recommendation;
- a show cause notice;
- 21 days to respond.

The Minister must consider the member's response prior to making a recommendation to the Governor that the member be dismissed.

Best interest is not defined and allows for a broad range of factors to form the grounds for dismissal. This could include where a Council Member has been charged with or convicted of an offence, and the charges or conviction are adversely affecting the Local Government.

It appears that the existing framework for dismissal has the capacity to respond to circumstances referenced in the SEMZ's motion and rationale. WALGA considers it is reasonable to expect that the Local Government Inspector may have greater capacity to provide targeted and timely investigation and advice to support this mechanism.

Current Suspension Provisions

Section 8.15E of the Act enables the Minister to suspend a Council Member or order them to undertake remedial action.

The Minister can only act where they are satisfied that it is appropriate to intervene, based on one or more of the following:

- The member has been charged with a disqualification offence.
- The Director General has made an allegation to SAT against the member, of a serious or recurrent breach.
- The Director General has written to the Minister advising that they suspect on reasonable grounds that one or more of the following applies:
 - o The member has failed to perform their role, functions or duties;
 - o The member's conduct has adversely affected the ability of another person to perform their role, functions or duties;

- o The member's conduct has adversely affected the ability of the Local Government to comply with the principles that apply under section 5.40 of the Act (principles affecting employment by Local Government, including the responsibility to provide safe and healthy working conditions in accordance with WHS legislation).

The Minister must give:

- The member a written notice of the proposed order that provides the allegations and particulars supporting the proposed order is based on.
- The member a show cause notice, allowing 21 days for the member's response
- Any submissions made by the member consideration prior to making the order.

While suspended, a Council Member is not entitled to be paid any fee or allowance to which they would otherwise be entitled. A Council Member is liable to repay annual allowances and fees paid in advance, as if the member had, for the period of their suspension, ceased to hold the office.

Options for reform of suspension

The current system shares some common elements with the Zone's proposal, however, some changes could be made to bring them into closer alignment. Under the current framework, the Director General and Minister would need to be satisfied that any reputational damage resulting from charges was impeding the workings of the Local Government before they could move to suspend a Council Member.

Charges resulting in reputational damage could be included in the legislation as an explicit ground for which the Director General can recommend suspension to the Minister. However, reputational damage may be somewhat narrow or subjective.

A 'best interests' test, consistent with that provided in the dismissal mechanism (discussed above), could allow the consideration of a broad range of factors, including reputational damage. A mechanism could be introduced allowing the Minister to suspend a Council Member who is charged with an offence that, despite not being a disqualification offence, satisfies the Minister that it is in the best interests of the Local Government to suspend the member. Consistent with the other grounds for suspension, this could be on the advice of the Director General, as the State Solicitor's Office will be primarily concerned with avoiding prejudice to any matter currently before the courts.

Local Government Reform Amendments

The *Local Government (Amendment) Act 2024* will transfer the powers of the Director General under these provisions to the soon-to-be-established Local Government Inspector. The Inspector/Inspectorate model has been introduced to provide improved oversight and early interventions capability into the Local Government sector.

The Inspector will be able initiate inquiries into the affairs of a local government and recommend suspension and dismissal of Council Members. It is expected that this newly created office may have greater independence, timeliness, focus and flexibility in addressing conduct issues.

The Governance Policy Team considered and endorsed the proposed advocacy position at its meeting on 19 May.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Kimberley Country Zone	No meeting held (no quorum)
Murchison Country Zone	No meeting held
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.

AVON MIDLAND COUNTRY ZONE

The WA Local Government sector advocates that:

1. A new disqualification criterion should be added to the *Local Government Act 1995* that disqualifies a person from serving as an Elected Member if they have been convicted of an offence against the Planning and Development Act, or the Building Act in the preceding five years.
2. A new suspension criterion should be added to the *Local Government Act 1995* allowing the Minister of Local Government to suspend a Council Member charged with a criminal offence, where the Minister is satisfied this would be in the best interests of the Local Government, based on advice of the Director General.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

The advocacy position could be made more specific in its application to more serious offences. The WA Criminal Code establishes two tiers of offences, summary offences and indictable offences (also referred to as crimes). These categories are reflected in existing disqualification provisions under the *Local Government Act 1995*, which refer to offences with an indictable penalty of more than 5 years.

In order to clarify the threshold criteria, further work could be undertaken with reference to existing provisions of the *Local Government Act 1995* and the WA Criminal Code.

EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE

That the following change be made to the recommendation in State Council item 8.1 as below:

Amend Point 1 of the recommendation to read:

1. A new suspension criterion should be added to the *Local Government Act 1995* that allows the Minister of Local Government to suspend a Council Member if they have been convicted of an offence against the Planning and Development Act, or the Building Act in the preceding five years.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Point 1 of the proposed advocacy position reflects WALGA's existing advocacy position, last reviewed by State Council in September 2022.

The current regime under the *Local Government Act 1995* provides for suspension on charges of certain offences and disqualification on conviction for those offences.

This reflects the principle that the lower form of intervention (suspension, rather than disqualification) is based on a lower threshold (charged, rather than convicted).

GOLDFIELDS ESPERANCE COUNTRY ZONE

The GVROC provide the following comments on its concerns regarding this issue:

- The wording used in the WALGA recommendation is not consistent for points 1 and 2 around "**charged with an offence**" versus "**convicted of an offence**" compared to the Executive Summary first dot point that uses the wording "*Minister to suspend Council Members charged with **criminal offences** likely to damage the reputation of the Local Government, and disqualify if convicted*". There is a big difference between being charged with an offence compared to being found guilty and convicted of a criminal offence and it needs to be clear on when the Minister has the power to suspend, whether just from a charge, even if the Councillor may be found not guilty, compared to being convicted of a criminal offence. GVROC suggest WALGA recommendation be reworded as per the Executive summary point listed above to be consistent.
- The GVROC also have concerns regarding onerous investigations being taken through the DLGSC and the independence of Inspectors from the public sector. The GVROC would like WALGA to advocate that investigations in regard to these issues are undertaken by an independent external to the public sector Investigator that can give an external independent view and advice to the Minister.
- The GVROC also questioned the reasoning why this item only considers the Planning and Development Act, or the Building Act, when local governments also have to operate and administer under a lot of other Acts e.g. the Health Act and should this be a more overarching across all relevant Acts?

That the GVROC notes:

1. the recommendation for WALGA to amend and rename advocacy position 2.5.5 *Disqualification Due to Conviction* as provided in the WALGA Recommendation and request WALGA consider the GVROC Comments as provided above in its advocacy on this issue.
2. WALGA to incorporate advocacy on this issue into its ongoing legislative reform engagement.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

The first Executive Summary dot point summarises the motion from the South East Metropolitan Zone, which called for suspension if a Council Member is charged with a criminal offence that has the potential to damage the reputation of the local government, and disqualification if convicted. The motion and the proposed advocacy position both reflect the principle that the lower form of intervention (suspension, rather than disqualification) can be based on a lower threshold (charged, rather than convicted). As noted above, the advocacy position could be made more specific in its application to more serious offences.

The proposed Local Government Inspector will be independent of the State Government, appointed by the Governor. Further work could be done to ensure the advocacy position considers the role of the Local Government Inspector.

Point 1 of the recommendation refers only to the Planning and Building legislation as these are the only two legislative regimes referred to in WALGA's current advocacy position on disqualification.

PILBARA COUNTRY ZONE

That the Pilbara Country Zone:

1. does not support the addition of part 2 to WALGA's existing advocacy position 2.5.5 at this time; and
2. supports revisiting the addition of part 2 to WALGA's existing advocacy position 2.5.5 once the regulations for the new Office of the Inspector have been put in place.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

The Zone's comment is noted. WALGA is seeking to respond to the SEMZ motion in a timely fashion. It is not yet known when the Office of the Inspector will be fully operational. However, further work could be done to ensure the advocacy position considers the role of the Local Government Inspector.

SOUTH METROPOLITAN ZONE

1. That WALGA amend and rename advocacy position 2.5.5 Disqualification Due to Conviction to read as follows:
Suspension and Disqualification for Offences
 1. *The WA Local Government sector advocates that:
A new disqualification criterion should be added to the Local Government Act 1995 that disqualifies a person from serving as an Elected Member if they have been convicted of an offence against the Planning and Development Act, or the Building Act in the preceding five years.*
 2. *A new suspension criterion should be added to the Local Government Act 1995 allowing the Minister of Local Government to suspend a Council Member charged with a serious offence, where requested by the Local Government and the Minister is satisfied this would be in the best interests of the Local Government, based on advice of the Director General.*
2. That WALGA incorporate advocacy on this issue into its ongoing legislative reform engagement.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

As noted above, the advocacy position could be made more specific in its application to more serious offences.

Requiring a request from the Local Government, likely a resolution of Council, would retain Local Government control over the exercise of this power. However, it would be highly sensitive for a Council to consider such a matter. Councils may require legal advice to ensure that they did not prejudice any ongoing legal proceedings or otherwise infringe on the rights of the accused. As a comparison, the Director General's advice to the Minister regarding the exercise of statutory powers would typically be informed by legal advice.

CENTRAL METROPOLITAN ZONE

The Central Metropolitan Zone did not support the WALGA recommendation.

NORTHERN COUNTRY ZONE

The Northern Country Zone did not support the WALGA recommendation.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

The two Zones opposition is noted.

SECRETARIAT SUMMARY COMMENT

Zone comments indicate further work is required to ensure that the advocacy position is appropriately targeted. This reflects the principle that Ministerial intervention should be reserved for serious matters. A deferral of this matter will also allow the role of the Local Government Inspector to be more fully considered and addressed in any revised advocacy position.

COMPOSITE RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Patrick Hall
Seconded: Cr Karen Wheatland

That WALGA defers consideration of this matter for further work, including:

- a. defining appropriately serious offences for intervention; and**
- b. addressing the role of the Local Government Inspector.**

AMENDMENT

Moved: President Paige McNeil
Seconded: Cr Haeden Miles

To insert a new point c. as follows:

- c. evaluating whether advocacy for disqualification based on convictions under the Planning and Development Act 2005 and Building Act 2011 should be retained.**

RESOLUTION 036.3/2025

CARRIED

THE SUBSTANTIVE MOTION AS AMENDED WAS PUT

That WALGA defers consideration of this matter for further work, including:

- a. defining appropriately serious offences for intervention; and**
- b. addressing the role of the Local Government Inspector.**
- c. evaluating whether advocacy for disqualification based on convictions under the Planning and Development Act 2005 and Building Act 2011 should be retained.**

RESOLUTION 037.3/2025

CARRIED

8.2 STATE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS AND DECISION MAKING ADVOCACY POSITION

By Coralie Claudio, Senior Policy Advisor Planning

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA:

- 1. Replace Advocacy Position 6.4 Development Assessment Panels with the following:**

6.4 State Development Applications and Decision Making

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

- 1. Ensure that decision making on development applications (DAs) is:***
 - a. consistent and accountable***
 - b. accessible to local communities***
 - c. respectful of, and appropriately applies, local planning frameworks in line with their statutory weight.***
- 2. Reform the Development Assessment Panel (DAP) system to:***
 - a. raise the DAP threshold from the current \$2 million to \$5 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold***
 - b. modify the composition of DAPs to provide equal representation of Specialist Members and Local Government Members***
 - c. review DAP processes to ensure proponents provide necessary information in a timely manner***
 - d. provide clear procedural guidance on the roles and functions of Local Government officers and Council***
 - e. allow access to the State Referral Coordination Unit for DAP applications to ensure timely and adequate referral responses from State Government agencies are provided to Local Governments.***
- 3. Abolish the state significant development assessment pathway (Part 11B of the Planning and Development Act 2005).***
- 4. If the significant development assessment pathway is retained, implement the following reforms:***
 - a. raise the cost threshold to \$50 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold***
 - b. align statutory timeframes with DAP and Local Government determined DAs***
 - c. ensure all developments are consistent with applicable local planning instruments and provide comprehensive guidelines for discretionary decision making, including applying extraordinary discretion***
 - d. delete references to 'mandatory significant development' to ensure the pathway remains entirely opt-in***
 - e. undertake periodic reviews of its operation and effectiveness.***

- 2. Notes the Development Assessment Panel 2011 – 2024 Review and State Development Pathway 2020 – 2025 Review reports.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is proposed that Advocacy Position 6.4 Development Assessment Panels be replaced with a new, expanded position that includes all forms of State Government development assessment and decision making.
- The updated position incorporates principles for state decision making, a refined list of recommended reforms to the Development Assessment Panels (DAPs) system and recommends that the significant development pathway be abolished but includes a list of recommended reforms if the pathway is retained.
- The draft position was informed by WALGA's review of the operation of the DAPs and the state significant development pathways, input from Local Government officers, and previous WALGA submissions.
- The draft position and accompanying review reports were provided to Local Governments for Council endorsed or CEO approved preferred feedback by 23 May.
- The Environment Policy team endorsed the position at their meeting on 29 May.

ATTACHMENT

- [Rationale for draft advocacy position](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed State Council replace the **current** Advocacy Position **6.4 Development Assessment Panels**:

The Association does not support Development Assessment Panels (DAPs), in their current structure.

Necessary changes to the structure of the DAPs system include:

1. *The abolishment of the current 'mandatory' mechanism where a proposal has a value of \$10 million or greater, and its replacement with an 'opt in' mechanism for all proposals.*
2. *Raising the DAP threshold from the current \$2 million to \$5 million,*
3. *The composition of DAPs should be modified to provide equal representation of Specialist Members and Local Government Members.*
4. *The creation of a distinct Special Matters DAP (SMDAP) is not supported, given there are already multiple avenues for determination on the basis of zoning and monetary value of applications. Should the State Government progress with the implementation of a SMDAP, the following changes are proposed to the model released in March 2022:*
 - *allow proponents with proposals that meet the threshold or criteria being able to opt-out of the SMDAP pathway and allow assessment and determination by Local Government*
 - *mandate consultation with the relevant Local Governments prior to the issuing of a Ministerial Order in relation to SMDAP Precinct Criteria, and ensure SMDAP Precincts be identified through regulations, rather than by the Minister,*
 - *include greater professional planning expertise, and knowledge of local context through the Local Government members of the District DAP, by including majority professional town planner panel members, with two Local Government*
 - *representatives*
 - *expand the role of Local Governments in SMDAP processes and appropriate remuneration for involvement of Local Governments be included to support the SMDAP decision-making process.*
5. *In principle, the further reduction in the number of panels from five to three is supported, to the extent that this reduces the administrative burden on local governments and enhances consistency of decision making.*

6. *In principle, the permanent appointment of panel members where this results in consistent decision-making is supported as this reduces the potential for conflicts of interest and ensures sound knowledge of DAP processes and procedures.*
7. *WALGA supports greater transparency around DAP processes and decisions, as community distrust of DAP decision-making is a key area of concern for many local governments.*

with a **new** advocacy position **6.4 State Development Applications and Decision Making Advocacy Position:**

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

1. *Ensure that decision making on development applications (DAs) is:*
 - a. *consistent and accountable*
 - b. *accessible to local communities*
 - c. *respectful of, and appropriately applies, local planning frameworks in line with their statutory weight.*
2. *Reform the Development Assessment Panel (DAP) system to:*
 - a. *raise the DAP threshold from the current \$2 million to \$5 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold*
 - b. *modify the composition of DAPs to provide equal representation of Specialist Members and Local Government Members*
 - c. *review DAP processes to ensure proponents provide necessary information in a timely manner*
 - d. *provide clear procedural guidance on the roles and functions of Local Government officers and Council*
 - e. *allow access to the State Referral Coordination Unit for DAP applications to ensure timely and adequate referral responses from State Government agencies are provided to Local Governments.*
3. *Abolish the state significant development assessment pathway (Part 11B of the Planning and Development Act 2005).*
4. *If the significant development assessment pathway is retained, implement the following reforms:*
 - a. *raise the cost threshold to \$50 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold*
 - b. *align statutory timeframes with DAP and Local Government determined DAs*
 - c. *ensure all developments are consistent with applicable local planning instruments and provide comprehensive guidelines for discretionary decision making, including applying extraordinary discretion*
 - d. *delete references to 'mandatory significant development' to ensure the pathway remains entirely opt-in*
 - e. *undertake periodic reviews of its operation and effectiveness.*

BACKGROUND

There are a range of development application (DAs) decision makers in the Western Australian Planning system. While Local Governments process and determine the vast majority of DAs, other State Government boards or agencies are also decision makers, particularly for complex proposals and public works. This includes DAPs, the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and other State Government agencies (i.e. DevelopmentWA) that determine DAs such as DAPs, significant development applications (Part 17 and Part 11B of the *Planning Development Act 2005*) and developments under region schemes, redevelopment schemes and improvement schemes and public works.

WALGA has historically opposed DAPs and the significant development pathway as they erode the role of Local Government in providing a valuable community perspective on planning proposals.

WALGA has undertaken two reviews of the performance of the DAP system in [2016](#) and [2020](#). Those reviews informed WALGA's current advocacy position, endorsed in May 2022, that recommends changes to the DAP system to ensure it operates in an efficient, effective, and transparent way, and appropriately considers matters of local planning context in decision-making.

The current position is being reviewed as part of WALGA's regular position review process and in recognition of significant planning reforms in 2024, specifically the replacement of the proposed special matters DAP with the permanent significant development pathway (Part 11B).

To inform the review of the DAP position and its ongoing advocacy, WALGA collated and reviewed data on the operation of the DAPs and the significant development pathway.

The [DAP Report](#) examines DAP data from its inception in 2011 to the end of the 2023-24 financial year, with a focus on observable trends since the previous report in 2020. The report indicates minor improvements in the DAP system, particularly in reliability and consistent decision making. Despite this, the DAP system continues to determine many low-value applications that lack strategic importance and should be redirected to the Local Government pathway.

The [Significant Development Pathway Report](#) examines data from the pathway's commencement in 2020 until 1 April 2025. The report finds that this pathway is used infrequently and does not process applications efficiently, contrary to its intended purpose and that the pathway's other goals, driving economic recovery (Part 17) and aiding housing supply (Part 11B), have also not been met.

The collated data will be uploaded to the [DAP Dashboard](#) on WALGA's website.

WALGA has drafted a revised advocacy position that will sit within the context of the Planning Principles and Reform advocacy position and will expand on the DAP position to:

1. Be applicable to all State Government DAs and approvals (e.g. significant development pathway, DAPs, Public Works, region scheme approvals, Development WA).
2. Establish principles to guide transparent and accountable decision-making on development applications, ensuring that local planning frameworks are appropriately considered, and communities, particularly in regional areas, are granted equitable access to the decision-making process.
3. Include a refined list of reforms to the DAP system, while retaining the position to increase the DAP threshold and for equal representation of Specialist Members and Local Government Members.
4. Include a recommendation that the significant development pathway be abolished based on the findings of the significant development pathway report, and includes a list of reforms if the pathway is to be retained to ensure it operates more efficiently and only processes genuine state significant projects.

The draft position and accompanying review reports were provided to Local Governments for Council endorsed or CEO preferred feedback by 23 May.

COMMENT

The current DAP advocacy position is outdated and does not reflect the current planning framework, specifically the introduction of the permanent significant development pathway (Part 11B of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*).

The proposed new advocacy position will complement WALGA's planning advocacy position, 6.1 Planning Principles and Reform, that notes decisions should be made by the level of government closest to and most impacted by a planning proposal and should appropriately reflect local environment, context, communities and character.

The proposed advocacy position has been informed by feedback from CEO approved and Council endorsed submissions, Local Government officer input and WALGA's previous submissions, specifically on DAP reforms and amendments to the *Planning and Development Act 2005* that introduced the significant development pathway.

Some minor amendments were made to the draft position in response to members' feedback, particularly regarding the recommendations for the state significant development pathway.

Local Government feedback was that the pathway was not functioning effectively in its current form. While some Local Governments advocated for its abolition, others considered that there may be benefits if the pathway was limited to genuine state-significant projects only and operated more efficiently. The draft position calls for the reforms to the pathway and for it to be subject to periodic review if retained.

Further information on the rationale for the position and feedback provided is attached.

The Environment Policy agreed to recommend that State Council endorse the new expanded position at their meeting on 29 May.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Kimberley Country Zone	No meeting held (no quorum)
Murchison Country Zone	No meeting held
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.

CENTRAL METROPOLITAN ZONE

That the Central Metropolitan Zone support the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.2 as amended below:

That WALGA:

1. Replace Advocacy Position 6.4 Development Assessment Panels with the following:

6.4 State Development Applications and Decision Making

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

1. *Ensure that decision making on development applications (DAs) is:*
 - a. *consistent and accountable*
 - b. *accessible to local communities*
 - c. *respectful of, and appropriately applies, local planning frameworks in line with their statutory weight.*
 - d. *based upon objective, unbiased and informative officer reports that provide necessary consideration of local planning frameworks.*
 2. *Reform the Development Assessment Panel (DAP) system to:*
 - a. *raise the DAP threshold from the current \$2 million to \$5 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold*
 - b. *modify the composition of DAPs to provide equal representation of Specialist Members and Local Government Members*
 - c. *review DAP processes to ensure proponents provide necessary information in a timely manner*
 - d. *provide clear procedural guidance on the roles and functions of Local Government officers and Council*
 - e. *allow access to the State Referral Coordination Unit for DAP applications to ensure timely and adequate referral responses from State Government agencies are provided to Local Governments.*
 - f. *require that the meetings be held within the Local Government municipality.*
 3. *Abolish the state significant development assessment pathway (Part 11B of the Planning and Development Act 2005).*
 4. *If the significant development assessment pathway is retained, implement the following reforms:*
 - a. *raise the cost threshold to \$100 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold*
 - b. *align statutory timeframes with DAP and Local Government determined DAs*
 - c. *ensure all developments are consistent with applicable local planning instruments and provide comprehensive guidelines for discretionary decision making, including applying extraordinary discretion*
 - d. *delete references to 'mandatory significant development' to ensure the pathway remains entirely opt-in*
 - e. *undertake periodic reviews of its operation and effectiveness.*
 - f. *remove the ability for the Premier to give authorisation for the lodgment and determination of an application.*
 5. *Reinstate the capacity for the CEO to engage with the Council about the Responsible Authority Report (RAR).*
 6. *If there is to be a benefit concession given, that the financial value of the community benefit is calculated and balanced with the financial benefit from the development, and that the community benefit is recorded in a public registry.*
2. Notes the Development Assessment Panel 2011 – 2024 Review and State Development Pathway 2020 – 2025 Review reports

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Point 1.d – Applicable local planning frameworks are captured in **point 1.c**, which has been expanded in the **composite recommendation** to also reference planning reports.

Point 2.f – this has been included as **point 2.f of the composite recommendation** to require DAP meetings to be held at the relevant Local Government office, where appropriate. However, in cases where agenda items are non-contentious or where logistical considerations make it more efficient, the option to conduct meetings online should be retained.

Point 4.a – this proposes increasing the eligibility threshold for the significant development pathway to \$100 million, increasing from the proposed \$50 million. Currently the eligible threshold is \$20 million in the Perth and Peel Regions, and \$5m in other parts of the state. Of the 44 projects determined by the pathway until 1 April 2025, only 12 projects would meet the \$100 million threshold. Eight determined DAs were valued between \$50 million and \$100 million. These DAs included mixed use developments, residential apartments, purpose-built student accommodation, aged care development and a hospital expansion, all which could be considered significant based on their land uses, scale and size. **No changes** have been recommended.

Point 4.f – while the cost threshold for the significant development pathway offers a clear eligibility criterion, it may exclude lower-value developments that still raise important state or regional issues and should be able to access the pathway, provided the process remains transparent and maintains public trust. Additionally, some regional Local Governments may lack the capacity to assess complex DAs, and the pathway offers an alternative, allowing them to recommend its use. To date, the Premier has authorised three DAs outside the monetary threshold— two extensions for concrete batching plants and the decommissioning of Chevron's Thevenard Island facilities. This highlights the need for flexibility in recognising unique circumstances. **No changes** have been recommended.

Point 5 – the [Local Government \(Development Assessment Panels\) Regulations 2025](#) recently clarified that the Local Government CEO was responsible for preparing and submitting the Responsible Authority Report (RAR) to DAP. This point as been redrafted and relocated to **2.g in the composite recommendation** to reinstate Councils ability to consider and provide a recommendation for a RAR.

Point 6 – A Public Registry is not an appropriate mechanism for recording community benefits associated with DAs. In accordance with point 1 of the Position Statement, such benefits should be transparently considered and determined through the DA assessment and approval process. **No changes** have been recommended.

CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE

That the Central Country Zone support the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.2, subject to the following inclusion as Point 5

5. [Reinstate the capacity for the CEO to engage with the Council about the Responsible Authority Report \(RAR\).](#)

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

This point as been redrafted and relocated to **2.g in the composite recommendation** to reinstate Councils ability to consider and provide a recommendation for a RAR.

EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE

That a new subclause be added to point 4 of the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda item 8.2 as below:

- f. Require meetings of the DAP to be held at a local government which is the subject of a matter before that meeting of the DAP.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Additional point 2.f has been included in the Composite Recommendation to require DAP meetings to be held at the relevant Local Government premises where appropriate, as explained above.

SOUTH EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE

That the South East Metropolitan Zone:

1. Supports the WALGA recommendation for State Council Agenda Item 8.2 as contained in the State Council Agenda and as provided above; and
2. Request the WALGA Secretariat to pursue a review and clarification of the Development Assessment Panel Code of Conduct 2024 section 2.3 provisions that prohibit a Local Government DAP member from seeking advice from the Local Government's professional planning staff regarding a development application that is either currently before the DAP or is proposed to be provided to the DAP (the prohibition on accessing professional planning advice disadvantages Local Government DAP member participation in DAP decision making).

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Point 2.d of the composite recommendation has been revised to specifically seek clarification on the ability of the Administration to engage with Council.

Mayor Caroline Knight declared an interest in this item and left the meeting at 4:28pm.

COMPOSITE RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Terresa Lynes
Seconded: President Cr Tony Dean

That WALGA:

1. **Replace Advocacy Position 6.4 Development Assessment Panels with the following:**

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

1. ***Ensure that decision making on development applications (DAs) is:***
 - a. ***consistent and accountable***
 - b. ***accessible to local communities***
 - c. ***respectful of, and appropriately applies, local planning frameworks in line with their statutory weight, as informed by objective, professional planning reports.***
2. ***Reform the Development Assessment Panel (DAP) system to:***
 - a. ***raise the DAP threshold from the current \$2 million to \$5 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold***
 - b. ***modify the composition of DAPs to provide equal representation of Specialist Members and Local Government Members***

- c. *review DAP processes to ensure proponents provide necessary information in a timely manner*
 - d. *provide clear procedural guidance on the roles and functions of Local Government officers and Council, including clarification on the ability for the Administration to provide advice to Council Members*
 - e. *allow access to the State Referral Coordination Unit for DAP applications to ensure timely and adequate referral responses from State Government agencies are provided to Local Governments*
 - f. *where appropriate, require meetings to be held within the relevant Local Government*
 - g. *reinstate the ability for Council to consider and provide a recommendation for a Responsible Authority Report.*
3. *Abolish the state significant development assessment pathway (Part 11B of the Planning and Development Act 2005).*
4. *If the significant development assessment pathway is retained, implement the following reforms:*
- a. *raise the cost threshold to \$50 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold*
 - b. *align statutory timeframes with DAP and Local Government determined DAs*
 - c. *ensure all developments are consistent with applicable local planning instruments and provide comprehensive guidelines for discretionary decision making, including applying extraordinary discretion*
 - d. *delete references to 'mandatory significant development' to ensure the pathway remains entirely opt-in*
 - e. *undertake periodic reviews of its operation and effectiveness.*
2. **Notes the Development Assessment Panel 2011 – 2024 Review and State Development Pathway 2020 – 2025 Review reports.**

AMENDMENT

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly
 Seconded: Cr Karen Wheatland

To insert a new point 5 as follows:

5. *Include in any planning report to a decision maker:*
- a. *the value of any direct financial benefit received by the applicant associated with the granting of development bonuses through a performance-based assessment*
 - b. *the value of any community benefit proposed in exchange for consideration of development bonus.*

RESOLUTION 038.3/2025

CARRIED

THE SUBSTANTIVE MOTION AS AMENDED WAS PUT

That WALGA:

1. Replace Advocacy Position 6.4 Development Assessment Panels with the following:

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

1. **Ensure that decision making on development applications (DAs) is:**
 - a. **consistent and accountable**
 - b. **accessible to local communities**
 - c. **respectful of, and appropriately applies, local planning frameworks in line with their statutory weight, as informed by objective, professional planning reports.**
2. **Reform the Development Assessment Panel (DAP) system to:**
 - a. **raise the DAP threshold from the current \$2 million to \$5 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold**
 - b. **modify the composition of DAPs to provide equal representation of Specialist Members and Local Government Members**
 - c. **review DAP processes to ensure proponents provide necessary information in a timely manner**
 - d. **provide clear procedural guidance on the roles and functions of Local Government officers and Council, including clarification on the ability for the Administration to provide advice to Council Members**
 - e. **allow access to the State Referral Coordination Unit for DAP applications to ensure timely and adequate referral responses from State Government agencies are provided to Local Governments**
 - f. **where appropriate, require meetings to be held within the relevant Local Government**
 - g. **reinstate the ability for Council to consider and provide a recommendation for a Responsible Authority Report.**
3. **Abolish the state significant development assessment pathway (Part 11B of the Planning and Development Act 2005).**
4. **If the significant development assessment pathway is retained, implement the following reforms:**
 - a. **raise the cost threshold to \$50 million and mandate periodic reviews of the threshold**
 - b. **align statutory timeframes with DAP and Local Government determined DAs**
 - c. **ensure all developments are consistent with applicable local planning instruments and provide comprehensive guidelines for discretionary decision making, including applying extraordinary discretion**
 - d. **delete references to 'mandatory significant development' to ensure the pathway remains entirely opt-in**
 - e. **undertake periodic reviews of its operation and effectiveness.**
5. **Include in any planning report to a decision making:**
 - a. **the value of any direct financial benefit received by the applicant associated with the granting of development bonuses through a performance-based assessment.**
 - b. **the value of any community benefit proposed in exchange for consideration of development bonus.**

2. **Notes the Development Assessment Panel 2011 – 2024 Review and State Development Pathway 2020 – 2025 Review reports.**

RESOLUTION 039.3/2025

CARRIED

Mayor Caroline Knight returned to the meeting at 4:40pm.

8.3 PUBLIC LIBRARY AGREEMENT

By Rebecca Hicks, Policy Officer Community

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the *State and Local Level Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA is a signatory to the *State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia* (the Agreement).
- The five-year Agreement defines roles and responsibilities in the delivery of public libraries and provides the structure and framework for the delivery of the WA Public Libraries Strategy and future vision for public library services.
- The current Agreement, endorsed by State Council in July 2020, is due for renewal in September 2025.
- WALGA has participated in the review of the Agreement, which has recommended minor amendments.
- Following the signing of a new Agreement, a sector consultation process will be undertaken for the associated Local Level Agreements between the State Library and Local Governments.
- The Agreement does not include funding arrangements for public libraries. WALGA continues to advocate for increased public library funding.

ATTACHMENT

- [State and Local Level Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia 2025 – 2030](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Endorsing the Agreement aligns with WALGA's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, particularly:

- Influence – Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government and empower the Local Government sector to build communities equipped for the future.
- Support – Grow opportunities for Local Governments' sharing of services and resources.
- Expertise – Optimise organisational capability to service members' needs and foster relationships between our subject matter experts and stakeholders.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Endorsement of the new Agreement aligns with WALGA's current [Advocacy Position 3.8 Public Libraries](#), which states:

1. *Western Australian Local Government public libraries provide valuable local cultural infrastructure, creating social and community hubs for community capacity building, recreation, education and literacy, digital inclusion, and social connection, cohesion and inclusion.*
2. *WALGA supports the provision of Public Library services in Western Australia through a formal partnership between Local Government and the State Government of Western Australia, governed by the Library Board Act 1951, namely the State and*

Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia (2020).

3. *The WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026 provides a framework for a shared vision, strategic direction and collaborative action in the provision of a vibrant and sustainable 21st century public library network.*
4. *It is essential that a sustainable funding model enables Local Governments to continue to deliver library services to support continued growth and adaptation to changing community needs.*

BACKGROUND

WALGA is a signatory to the *State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia* (the Agreement), which is due for renewal in September 2025. The Agreement defines the roles and responsibilities for each tier of government in the delivery of public libraries and provides the structure and framework for the delivery of the [WA Public Libraries Strategy 2022-2026](#) and the future vision for public library services.

Following internal endorsement from signatories, the current Agreement received final endorsement in September 2020 by the Public Library Working Group (PLWG), which includes: WALGA, the State Library of Western Australia (SLWA), the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), Public Libraries WA Inc. and Local Government Professionals Australia WA. The same process will be undertaken for this renewal.

Connected to the Agreement are Local Level Agreements between the SLWA and individual Local Governments that provide public library services. Local Level Agreements set out more detailed public library service delivery requirements and will be reviewed in early 2026, including sector consultation.

COMMENT

WALGA has worked with SLWA to review the Agreement to meet the September 2025 renewal date. Amendments are minor and do not raise any issues for WALGA Members.

The scope of the Agreement does not extend to public library funding. SLWA is currently reviewing the Public Library Material Funding Allocation Model. WALGA and Local Governments will be consulted as part of the review.

State Government funding has failed to keep pace with the needs of public libraries, population growth or inflation. WALGA continues to [advocate](#) for increased overall funding for public libraries to maintain and enhance service levels that meet the diverse needs of communities across WA and support the implementation of the WA Public Library Strategy.

Following the renewal of the Agreement, WALGA will work with SLWA to develop a sector-wide consultation plan for the review of Local Level Agreements.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.

Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Kimberley Country Zone	No meeting held (no quorum)
Murchison Country Zone	No meeting held
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio
Seconded: President Cr Phillip Blight

That State Council endorse the *State and Local Level Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia.*

RESOLUTION 040.3/2025

CARRIED

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY STATE COUNCILLORS (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)

8.4 FINANCE AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – 18 JUNE 2025 CONFIDENTIAL

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

VOTING REQUIREMENT: ABSOLUTE MAJORITY

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Helen Sadler
Seconded: President Chris Antonio

That State Council:

- 1. Endorse the Minutes of the Finance and Services Committee meeting held on 18 June 2025.**
- 2. Endorse the WALGA Budget 2025-26, being for the full year ending 30 June 2026 as recommended by the Finance and Services Committee.**

RESOLUTION 041.3/2025

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Finance and Services Committee met on 18 June 2025.
- The Minutes of the meeting have been distributed to members of State Council under separate cover.
- The Committee endorsed the WALGA Budget 2025-26.

ATTACHMENTS – CONFIDENTIAL

- Finance and Services Committee Minutes – 18 June 2025
- Attachments to Minutes:
 - o 6.1 WALGA Finance Report Board Pack 31 May 2025
 - o 6.4 Audit Planning Memorandum 30 June 2025
 - o 6.6 Budget Report 2025-26 and Budget Pack 2025-26.
 - o 7.2 Context Capital Consultants Report
 - o 7.3 Ironbark Background Paper: Procurement Opportunities for Energy

COMMENT

At the meeting on 18 June, the Finance and Services Committee endorsed the WALGA Budget 2025-26.

The draft budget had previously been presented to the Finance and Services Committee at a workshop on 29 May for discussion and feedback. State Council was then provided with a budget update at the Information Forum on 4 June.

The Committee endorsed the WALGA Budget 2025-26 ahead of consideration by State Council at this meeting.

The CEO and Chief Financial Officer will provide a presentation on the WALGA Budget 2025-26 to State Council in the Strategic Forum.

In addition to the standard finance and services reporting, the Committee considered the following matters:

- Approval for External Auditors to Perform Non-Assurance Services and the Audit Plan 2024-25
- Report on use of Delegation
- Investment Services
- WALGA Sustainable Energy Supply Project
- Associate Membership Activity Report

8.5 APPOINTMENT TO FINANCE AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

By Meghan Dwyer, Executive Officer Governance

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Phillip Blight

Seconded: President Chris Antonio

That State Council appoint President Cr Elizabeth Sudlow, the State Council representative from the Northern Country Zone to the Finance and Services Committee.

RESOLUTION 042.3/2025

CARRIED

BACKGROUND

President Cr Kirrilee Warr resigned as a State Councillor following her election to WA Parliament.

This resulted in a vacancy on the Finance and Services Committee.

An election was held at the June Northern Country Zone meeting for the vacant State Councillor position, and President Cr Elizabeth Sudlow was elected.

COMMENT

It is proposed that the newly elected State Councillor, President Cr Elizabeth Sudlow, fill the vacant position on the Finance and Services Committee.

8.6 SELECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES – 17 JUNE 2025 – CONFIDENTIAL

By Chantelle O'Brien, Zones Governance Officer

Cr Tony Dean declared an interest in this item and left the meeting at 4:42pm.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly
Seconded: Cr Les Price

That State Council:

- 1. Notes the resolution contained in the 17 June 2025 Selection Committee Minutes.**
- 2. Endorse the Selection Committee recommendations contained in the 17 June 2025 Selection Committee Minutes.**

RESOLUTION 043.3/2025

CARRIED

Cr Tony Dean returned to the meeting at 4:43pm.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Selection Committee recently met for their scheduled ordinary meeting on 17 June 2025.
- At that meeting, the Committee considered nominees for the following vacancies:
 - o WA Biosecurity Council
 - o WA Environmental Health Professional Review Board
 - o Local Health Authorities Analytical Committee

ATTACHMENT

- Selection Committee Minutes – 17 June 2025 – CONFIDENTIAL

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the resolution of State Council in February 2002, the WALGA Selection Committee was established to oversee the selection process for Local Government vacancies on boards and committees.

The Selection Committee conducts a merit-based and transparent assessment process encompassing the principle of “best person for the job”. Upon completion of the assessment of nominations for vacancies, the Selection Committee either endorses preferred candidates for appointment (under delegated authority) or makes advisory recommendations to State Council for ratification of preferred candidates.

COMMENT

Nominations opened in early May and closed on 6 June.

There were three vacancies for the Selection Committee’s consideration, and they were:

- WA Biosecurity Council
- WA Environmental Health Professional Review Board
- Local Health Analytical Authorities Committee

WA Biosecurity Council

Following a request to repeat the nomination process from Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, WALGA received three additional nominations to the two already received from the February process. The Selection Committee resolved to put forward two nominations that were highly rated.

WA Environmental Health Professional Review Board

The outgoing officer that has been on this Board for many years on behalf of Local Government is leaving Local Government and therefore has resigned from the Board. This has created a vacancy which received two nominations.

Local Health Authorities Analytical Committee (LHAAC)

LHAAC are looking to fill a Metropolitan vacancy on the Local Health Authorities Committee. No nominations were received for this round of advertising and is recommended for readvertising.

8.7 HONOURS PANEL MINUTES – 2 MAY 2025 CONFIDENTIAL

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

NOTED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Honours Panel met on 2 May 2025.
- The purpose of the meeting was to consider the nominations submitted for the 2025 Honours Program and to determine Award recipients.
- A total of 50 individuals were nominated for the 2025 Honours Program.
- 44 Award recipients were determined by the Honours Panel.

BACKGROUND

The annual Local Government Honours Program recognises and celebrates the outstanding achievements and lasting contributions made by Elected Members and employees to their respective Local Governments, the Local Government sector, WALGA and the wider community.

In 2025, there are five awards available in the program:

- Local Government Medal
- Life Membership
- Eminent Service Award
- Merit Award
- Troy Pickard Young Achievers Award

As per Schedule 2 of the Association Constitution, the Honours Panel has delegated powers from State Council to oversee the entire Honours Program process.

COMMENT

The 2025 Honours Program opened on 4 February and nominations closed on 23 April.

A total of 50 individuals were nominated for the 2025 Honours Program. 44 Award recipients were determined by the Honours Panel. Several award recipients were recognised in categories different from those in which they were nominated.

Award	Nominations Received	Award Recipients
Local Government Medal	2	0
Life Membership	2	2
Eminent Service Award	22	19
Merit Award	21	22
Troy Pickard Young Achievers Award	3	1
Total	50	44

The Nominators and Award Recipients have been notified of the Honours Panel decision.

The Honours Awards will be presented at a function on Saturday, 19 July at the Western Australian Museum, Boola Bardip.

Award recipients will be embargoed until the Awards function.

**8.8 LGISWA BOARD MINUTES INCLUDING ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS TO
SCHEME MANAGER REMUNERATION AND TRUSTEE FEES –
CONFIDENTIAL**

By Sam McLeod, Manager Commercial Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Logan Howlett JP
Seconded: Cr Karen Wheatland

That State Council:

- 1. Note the minutes of the LGISWA Board meeting held on 23 May 2025;**
- 2. Notes the 2025-26 LGISWA Scheme Budget;**

[REDACTED]

- 5. Notes the special request in relation to WorkCare is being considered further by WALGA as a contract management matter; and**
- 6. Notes the establishment of a LGISWA Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) and related matters.**

RESOLUTION 044.3/2025

CARRIED

8.9 USE OF THE ASSOCIATION'S COMMON SEAL

By Nick Sloan, Chief Executive Officer

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Logan Howlett JP
Seconded: Mayor Caroline Knight

That State Council notes and endorses the use of Common Seal being affixed to the Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy Financial Assistance Agreement for 2025 between the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and WALGA.

RESOLUTION 045.3/2025

CARRIED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Common Seal has been applied to the Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy Financial Assistance Agreement between the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and WALGA.
- Three priority urban greening will be delivered collaboratively by WALGA and the Local Government Urban Forest Working Group (UFWG) in 2025. Project implementation is supported by a funding allocation of \$90,900 (ex GST) from the WAPC.

BACKGROUND

Clause 26 of the WA Local Government Association Constitution, which establishes and regulates the use of the Association's common seal, provides that:

'The Association shall have a common seal which shall be held in the custody of the Chief Executive Officer at all times. The common seal may be affixed to documents by resolution of the State Council in the presence of the Chief Executive Officer and one of either the President or Deputy President.'

The Chief Executive Officer shall maintain a register in which shall be recorded the details of all documents to which the common seal has been affixed.'

On 4 December 2002, the State Council delegated power to affix the Association common seal to the President, Deputy President and Chief Executive Officer as below:

- *Affixation of the Association's common seal be undertaken upon the resolution of State Council except where it is impractical to obtain prior approval;*
- *In instances where obtaining prior approval is impractical, authority to affix the Common Seal be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and one of either the President or Deputy President; and*
- *A regular report be submitted to State Council "for noting" outlining all instances where the Common Seal has been used without prior resolution.*

COMMENT

WALGA has developed detailed project scopes and budgets for three priority urban greening projects, as identified by the UFWG at the December 2024 meeting:

- climate ready street tree trials
- creation of a Perth and Peel urban forest spatial mapping layer

- a guide on structural engineering options to support root management and tree growth

The WAPC is providing financial support for urban greening demonstration projects in the Perth and Peel metropolitan region, which is intended to contribute to the achievement of the State Government's Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy, which is currently under development.

There are six demonstration projects being funded by the WAPC, with the three priority projects nominated by WALGA endorsed for funding.

All demonstration projects are designed to enhance tree canopy and green spaces across the Perth and Peel regions, with learnings from the projects to be applicable state-wide.

WALGA, through the Urban Forest Facilitator, is the project coordinator and has established Steering Groups for each project. Steering Groups comprise representatives from the UFWG, DPLH and other targeted stakeholders such as State Government, research organisations and peak representative bodies. Steering Group members will provide specialist knowledge and guidance to ensure a collaborative, shared approach to project implementation.

8.10 CEO PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT 2024-2025 CONFIDENTIAL

By Lauren Mathison, Manager People and Culture

All WALGA staff left the meeting at 4:45pm.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved:

Cr Paul Kelly

Seconded:

Mayor Logan Howlett JP

That State Council:

RESOLUTION 046.3/2025

CARRIED

All WALGA staff returned to the meeting at 5:05pm.

9 POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1 INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY TEAM REPORT

Presented by Policy Team Chair, Cr Stephen Strange

NOTED

The Infrastructure Portfolio comprises the following work units:

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

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting held on 7 May 2025.

1. Matters for State Council Decision

Nil

2. Matters for State Council Noting

The Policy Team discussed the following matters:

- Progressing the Speed Management Policy adopted by State Council in 2024.
- Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.
- Local Government input to the review of graduated driver training and licencing system.

Cr Karen Wheatland left the meeting at 5:02pm and did not return.

9.2 PEOPLE AND PLACE POLICY TEAM REPORT

Presented by Policy Team Chair, President Cr Phillip Blight

NOTED

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 21 May.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

The Policy Team discussed and endorsed the State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia, which is included for decision in the July State Council Agenda ([item 8.3](#)).

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

The Policy Team noted the following items in the May State Council Agenda, including:

- Item 9.2 People and Place Policy Team Report
- Item 10.2 Draft State Public Health Plan Submission
- Item 11.1.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio

3. PEOPLE AND PLACE POLICY TEAM MATTERS

Gascoyne Country Zone Resolution – Indigenous Land Use Agreements for Towns/Cities

The Policy Team considered the following resolution from the Gascoyne Country Zone.

That WALGA State Council request the State Government on behalf of all towns where there are Unallocated Crown Lands within townsites that are subject to Native Title negotiate an ILUA, at the State's cost, for the extinguishment of Native Title.

The Policy Team discussed the Zone's resolution and noted that WALGA will undertake further work to explore options to respond and will provide further advice at the next Policy Team meeting.

2025 Local Government Emergency Management Forum

The Policy Team noted that WALGA will hold its first Local Government Emergency Management Forum on Tuesday, 17 June. The theme for the Forum is *Local Government Future Proof: Preparing today for tomorrow's challenges*. More information and the registration link are available [here](#).

The Policy Team also received updates on:

- WALGA's inaugural Aboriginal Elected Member Roundtable
- 2025 Aboriginal Engagement Forum
- Public Health Planning Master Class Series
- Outcomes of the CEO Emergency Management Roundtable

- Pole top fires were raised as an issue at the last Policy Team meeting. WALGA provided the following update:
 - o Western Power ceased washing insulators on live power lines due to safety concerns, which caused an increase in pole-top fires. WALGA raised this issue in a [submission](#) to the Economic Regulation Authority. Western Power has been undertaking alternative treatments including silicone spraying and washing from helicopters.

Cr Haeden Miles left the meeting at 5:10pm and did not return.

9.3 GOVERNANCE POLICY TEAM REPORT

Presented by Policy Team Chair, Mayor Patrick Hall

NOTED

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 meeting held on 19 May.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Suspension and Disqualification for Offences Advocacy Position

The Policy Team reviewed a report proposing an updated advocacy position to provide the Minister for Local Government with discretionary powers under the *Local Government Act 1995* to suspend council members who are criminally charged, and to disqualify them upon conviction.

The review was conducted following a Zone resolution from the South East Metropolitan Zone.

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

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

The Policy Team received an update on the status of Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 amendments to the *Local Government Act*, as currently understood by WALGA as listed below.

Tranche	Reform	Comments	Implementation Timeframe
1	Public Registers	Submission provided following State Council 7 May.	2026
1	CEO Matters	Submission provided following State Council 7 May.	2026
1	Communications Agreements	Expecting public consultation to commence this week. Closing date TBC	Post elections, October 2025
1	Meeting Procedures	Regulations currently in drafting process. Expecting further targeted consultation.	Post elections, October 2025

2	Audit Risk and Improvement Committees	Drafting to commence soon and be progressed quickly.	Post elections, October 2025
1	Council Plans	IPR Working Group	2 year implementation period
2	LG Inspector / Monitors • Confidentiality changes	Priority. Aim to appoint Inspector Q4 2025	Q1 2026
2	Adjudicators and breach system	With Inspectorate	2026
2	Vexatious and frivolous complaints (LG CEO power to restrict communication) Inspector commencement	With Inspectorate	2026
2	Rates and Revenue Policy	Work in progress at Department	Effect by 1 Jan 2026, would require LGs to comply by 1 March 2026
1	Community Engagement Charters		2026
1	Community Surveys		2026
1	Alfresco Dining		2026
1	Crossovers		2026
2	Regional Subsidiaries (Regulations)		2026
2	Building Upgrade Finance		2026
2	CEO/senior employee disqualifications		2026
2	Shared CEO/senior employees		2026

Mayor Logan Howlett left the meeting at 5:13pm and did not return.

9.4 ENVIRONMENT POLICY TEAM REPORT

Presented by Policy Team Chair, Cr Les Price

NOTED

The Environment Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

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

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

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Advocacy Position Review

The Environment Policy Team considered the draft Advocacy Position and endorsed the recommendation that State Council adopt a new State Development Applications and Decision Making Advocacy Position.

Agenda [item 8.2](#) relates to this matter.

2. ENVIRONMENT POLICY TEAM MATTERS

Climate Change Advocacy Position

At the 24 March Environment Policy Team meeting, it was agreed that WALGA would develop a consultation approach for consideration by the Policy Team. The Policy Team agreed to the proposed consultation approach whereby the composite Advocacy Position and associated background paper considered by State Council will be provided to all Local Governments (via communication to CEOs and Mayors/Presidents) for a 10-week consultation period, with Council endorsed or CEO approved feedback preferred. The Policy Team will then meet again to consider feedback provided and a composite resolution, which will then be included as an item for decision for a subsequent round of Zone / State Council meetings.

The Policy Team also received updates on the following:

- H5 Bird Flu
- Native Vegetation Regulation engagement
- Draft Child Care Premises Position Statement

Upcoming Renewable Energy Forum to be held on 12 June.

9.5 MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL (MWAC) REPORT

Presented by Chair, Cr Karen Wheatland

NOTED

This Report provides an update on matters considered since the last State Council meeting by the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC), at the meeting held on 30 April.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Nil.

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

Nil.

3. MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL MATTERS

MWAC considered:

- Better Practice Waste Management at Public Events Guidance:
 - o Local Governments host various community events, which provide an opportunity to adopt better waste management practices. Some Local Governments have developed their own sustainable events policies.
 - o The Guideline aims to provide a consistent approach for public events.
 - o Input on the Guideline, from Local Government, has been received and incorporated.
 - o The Guideline is being introduced to the sector via a Webinar on 27 May.
- The development of a Better Practice Guideline for Procurement of Waste Services. Members discussed the draft guideline and provided input regarding the key matters that Elected Members would seek from Officer reports on waste procurement.

MWAC received updates on:

- Review of policy statements and better practice documents
- Soft plastic recycling – Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) application to establish a product stewardship scheme
- B-Cycle battery product stewardship – ACCC application to continue to operate a Scheme
- Progress on work related to improving waste management infrastructure and contingency planning, and governance
- FOGO Forum held on Tuesday, 11 March
- E-Cigarette advocacy
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Authorised Officer Training
- Household Hazardous Waste Battery Campaign

10 MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION

10.1 2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDIT EXPERIENCE SURVEY RESULTS

By Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance

NOTED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA has again partnered with Local Government Professionals WA (LG Professionals) to survey the Local Government sector on experiences during the most recent annual financial audit process.
- The 2025 survey questions asked respondents about their experience of the 2023/24 audit process.
- Questions were largely the same as those in the audit surveys conducted in 2023 and 2024, allowing for direct comparison of results over time.
- Over the three years of the audit survey, the key issues identified have remained consistent. These areas demonstrated varying levels of improvement in this year's survey results:
 - o timeframe and delays;
 - o additional workload on Local Government staff;
 - o cost;
 - o inconsistent advice from contract Auditors and the Office of the Auditor General (OAG); and
 - o asset valuation requirements.
- WALGA and LG Professionals have met with representatives from the OAG to share the outcomes from the survey and discuss the experience and concerns of Members.
- 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 2025 survey results.

ATTACHMENT

- [2025 Audit Experience Survey Results Summary](#)
- Audit survey results comparison infographic

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's current Advocacy Position in relation to the Local Government audit process was updated in July 2024 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; and*
7. *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 the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries 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.

For the past three years, WALGA have 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 the 2023/24 audit process, utilising similar questions to the 2023 and 2024 surveys to create a comparison over time.

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.

WALGA and LG Professionals have met with representatives from the OAG to share the results of the survey and broadly discuss the experience of Member Local Governments during the 2023/24 audit process.

COMMENT

The 2025 survey was distributed to all 139 Local Governments in February, with responses closing in mid-March.

A total of 59 Local Governments (42.5%) responded, compared to 83 (58%) in 2024 and 91 (62%) in 2023.

The survey was largely comprised of the same questions as previous years, 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 2025 survey highlight an improving audit scenario when compared with the last two years. Comparison of results in the five key emerging issue areas identified in the 2023 and 2024 surveys (which has formed the basis for WALGA's advocacy efforts to the OAG) demonstrate notable improvements in most areas.

Timeframe and delays

In 2023 just over 50% of respondents identified that their audits were failing to hit the timeframes set for the process. This was substantially improved in 2024, with 82% of respondents identifying compliance with those required timeframes. In 2025 this has again improved to 98%, providing a high level of confidence that this is no longer an issue of concern in the sector.

Additional workload on Local Government staff

In both 2023 and 2024, 80% of respondents were concerned at the additional workload that was being generated for their staff by the audit process beyond the tasks anticipated in the pre-audit preparation advice. That level of concern has reduced to 68% in 2025 and whilst that is a move in the right direction, 68% still represents a substantial proportion of respondents and clearly indicates that this remains an issue within the sector.

Cost

There continues to be frustration across the sector with the escalating costs of the audit, which is significantly above indices such as CPI and Wage Growth. Transparency of costings and the justification of costs were the dominant concerns of survey respondents.

Inconsistent advice from contract Auditors and OAG

Receiving inconsistent advice from contracts Auditors versus from the OAG was a significant issue for nearly 20% of respondents in 2023. This reduced significantly in 2024 to only 6%, but has increased to 11% in 2025. The 2025 result suggests more needs to be done to ensure consistency between auditors.

Asset Valuation Requirements

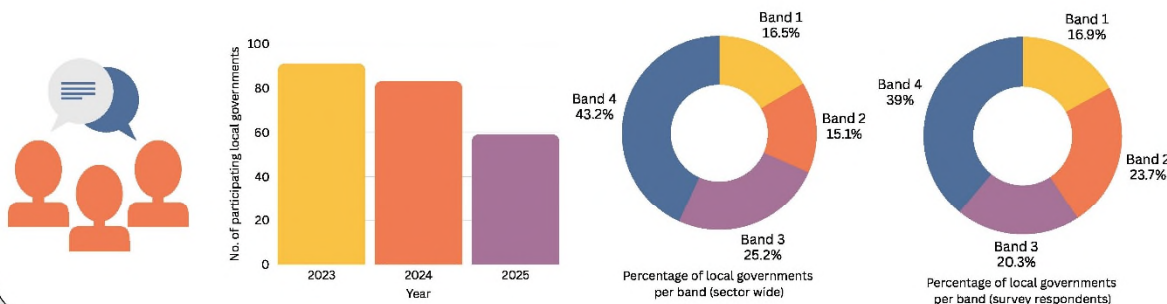
"Fair Value" was a significant issue for respondents in 2023, and reform was championed by a range of sector proponents resulting in changes that largely diminished criticisms of the valuation system in the 2024 audit survey. No significant criticisms of Fair Value were forthcoming in the 2025 survey suggesting that this issue is considered solved.

CONCLUSION

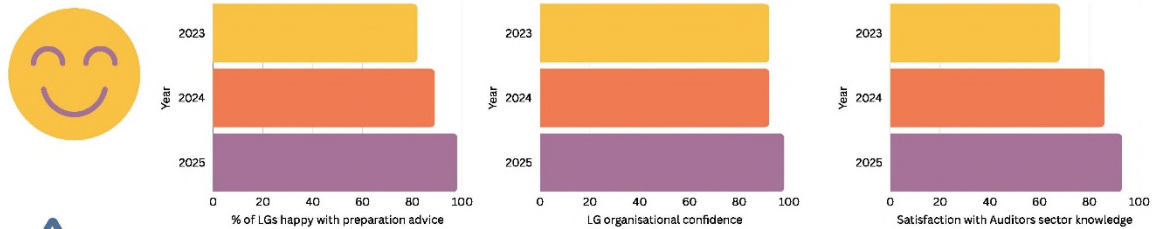
The 2025 survey results did not indicate any new, previously unidentified issues with the audit process, and most of the key issues above showed at least some improvement in this year's survey results. This suggests that the ongoing surveying, education, communication and advocacy work being undertaken by WALGA and LG Professionals with the OAG and the Local Government sector is appropriately interrogating the issues.

WALGA will continue its advocacy efforts with the OAG to secure the best result for Local Governments.

Survey participation is easing but still significant and representative of the sector



Feedback is generally positive and shows improvements in the audit experience

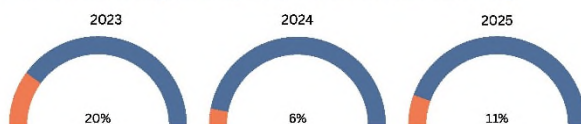


BUT not all requirements were notified in some cases

Audit Conduct: Professionalism and timeliness of auditors were high.



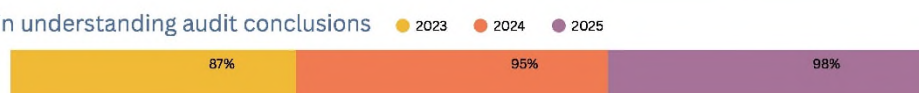
There was a slight drop in perceived consistency



Increase in workload on LG staff, beyond anticipation



Well supported in understanding audit conclusions



Post Audit

- Concerns about costs
- Perception that audit scope is growing - particularly IT
- Not all information requested prior to site visit
- More time needs to be spent onsite by some auditors
- Increased workload for LG staff
- 25% either did not know of, or did not use the OAG guide
- Generally higher levels of satisfaction with auditors (both OAG and contractors) overall

Future Focus

Reducing cost



Reducing workload impacts on local government staff



10.2 RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

By Lisa Harwood, Principal Policy Advisor Economic Development

NOTED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Western Australia's energy sector is transforming to achieve the State and Australian Governments' 2050 net zero emissions target.
- There is no comprehensive framework to guide the energy transition, including expectations regarding consultation and the delivery of community benefits by project proponents.
- State Council endorsed a suite of renewable energy-related advocacy positions in September 2024.
- WALGA has since been progressing a number of initiatives to support Local Governments.
- This includes the development of a Community Benefits and Engagement Guide to support Local Governments when engaging with developers and their communities, which has now been finalised.

ATTACHMENTS

- [Renewable Energy in WA – WALGA Research Paper](#)
- [Empowering Local Governments – Planning for Renewable Energy](#)
- [Draft Community Benefits and Engagement Guide](#) (and [Renewable Project Tracker](#))

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

BACKGROUND

WALGA developed three advocacy policy positions related to the renewable energy transition that were endorsed by State Council at its September 2024 meeting. These positions form the basis of WALGA's advocacy on this issue and are guiding our discussions with Government and advocacy on behalf of our Members.

It is essential that the energy transition currently underway delivers economic opportunities, ensures reliable and affordable electricity, and provides benefits for local communities. WALGA is calling on the State Government to develop a comprehensive framework to manage the impact of the energy transition that includes local engagement and the realisation of local community benefits from energy transition projects as a priority.

Negotiating community benefits and engaging with developers in the absence of a State framework continues to be a key challenge for Local Governments. WALGA commenced work on preparing a Community Benefits and Engagement Guide at the beginning of 2025 at the request of Members. The purpose of the Guide is to provide succinct guidance to the sector on managing engagement and community benefit challenges when it comes to large scale renewable energy projects.

COMMENT

WALGA has now finalised its Community Benefits and Engagement Guide (see attachment). A series of templates and checklists accompanies the Guide to provide practical resources for Local Governments to use.

Local Governments have been kept up to date with the progress of the Guide via State Council items for noting, emails to all CEOs from the WALGA CEO, and updates in the Teams Group for Local Government leaders.

The process of developing the Guide began in February 2025 and has involved engagement with Local Governments throughout, including:

- two workshops in March attended by 28 representatives, providing the opportunity for Local Governments to discuss the challenges they face with community benefits and engagement with developers and the community. Topics discussed include the need for the sector to work together; concerns around housing and other infrastructure; community impact; and the planning process;
- an information session in May attended by 35 Local Government representatives to take them through the draft Guide. Topics discussed include guidance on how to engage with State Government; rating mechanisms; and the planning application process;
- the consultant also engaged industry (Clean Energy Council and Smart Energy Council) and State Government (PoweringWA and Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage) to provide input into, and feedback on, the draft Guide;
- a two-week feedback period, providing Local Governments the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Guide, with nine Local Governments providing feedback.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

GOLDFIELDS ESPERANCE COUNTRY ZONE

The GVROC note the guide but believe it does not take into consideration the following concerns:

- Mining Developments and their use of renewable energy and how post mining these renewable energy sources can benefit the local towns and communities.
- There is also concern that the State Government will again take away approval and planning processes from LGAs for renewable energy projects, not allowing them to be engaged in the develop of these projects to ensure that local towns and communities receive benefits from their development.
- Rating issues for LGAs with these projects and the associated camps around them.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

- WALGA recognises the benefits that legacy renewable energy infrastructure from mining companies could have to local towns and communities. WALGA also acknowledges that the Guide doesn't reference industrial decarbonisation or the

mining industry. The focus of our advocacy and work to date has been on renewable energy developments on agricultural or pastoral land. The mining industry has its own unique complexities and thus has not been included in the scope of the Guide.

- WALGA agrees it is important that Local Governments have involvement in the planning and approval processes for renewable energy developments. The Guide itself is an operational document, separate from WALGA's advocacy efforts. We will continue to advocate to State Government for Local Government involvement in approval processes.
- WALGA deems community benefits and rates as two separate, but equally important, issues- community benefits is about social licence, while rates are about recouping costs associated with renewable energy developments. While it is not the role of the Guide to address the rating issue, WALGA has been working with a consultant to conduct a separate piece of work looking into the rating of renewable energy facilities. This work is due for completion in July, and will cover a legislative framework review, a review of how other Australian jurisdictions are managing the rating of renewable energy facilities, and a summary of options and recommendations going forward.

10.3 REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROAD ASSETS AND EXPENDITURE 2023/24

By Mark Bondietti, Policy Manager Transport and Roads

NOTED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Report on Local Government Road Assets and Expenditure 2023/24 has been finalised.
- This Report provides information, statistics and trends on:
 - o the length and types of roads and bridges managed by Local Governments;
 - o sources of funding and the use of funds in expanding, upgrading, renewing and maintaining roads, paths and bridges;
 - o actual expenditure relative to that needed to sustainably maintain the road network;
 - o Road safety performance on Local Government roads.
- The report is intended to underpin advocacy for continued and increased Federal and State funding for Local Government roads and to support Councils wishing to benchmark aspects of their own roads programs with similar or neighbouring areas.

ATTACHMENT

- [Report on Local Government Road Assets and Expenditure 2023/24](#)

BACKGROUND

The Report on Local Government Road Assets and Expenditure 2023/24 (the report) was produced by WALGA with assistance from the WA Local Government Grants Commission. The report provides information on the lengths and types of roads, paths and bridges and highlights trends in the data over the preceding five years. It includes statistics and trends on the funding sources and amount of Local Government expenditure on roads, paths and bridges. Details are provided on the allocation of expenditure between expansion, upgrade, maintenance and renewal of the network at a regional level and for individual Local Governments. Trends in the road safety performance on Local Governments roads from 2019 to 2023 are provided.

The expenditure statistics are analysed to provide comparisons of road preservation performance, net preservation needs and expenditure effort. These comparisons provide insight into the adequacy of funding and the difference between road preservation needs and current expenditure on road preservation.

COMMENT

Local Government is responsible for 127,952 kilometres of roads with a replacement value of over \$40.5 billion, which makes up 87% of the State Road network (excluding Forestry and National Park roads). Only 33% of these roads are sealed with a bitumen surface, the rest being gravel or unformed roads. In 2023/24 the total expenditure on Local Government roads was \$1034.1 million and 49% of this was funded by State and Federal Government grants. Three and a half percent of this investment in roads in 2023/24 was to repair flood damage. In the last five years, total road expenditure has increased by 11.7%.

Much of the Local Government road network is now approaching the end of its design life and an increasing portion of funding is being spent on maintenance and renewal (collectively termed preservation). In 2023/24 expenditure on preservation (excluding flood damage) was \$752.5 million amounting to 72.7% of the total expenditure.

An important objective of the report is to assess if road expenditure on preservation is keeping up with road preservation needs. This is determined by comparing actual annual expenditure on road preservation with the estimated amount needed to maintain the roads in their current condition in that year. The estimated cost of maintaining the Local Government road network in its current condition in 2023/24 was \$1090.4 million and Local Governments spent \$752.4 million on preservation. There was therefore a shortfall of \$338.0 million. This is \$80.8 million more than 2022/23 and \$144.2 million more than 2019/20, which indicates that the average condition of the road network is deteriorating.

A further important objective is to assess the sustainability and capacity of Local Government to fund their road preservation requirements. For regional Local Governments, 62% of road expenditure is funded by State or Federal Government grants and for the Wheatbelt, this figure rises to 75%. On average, Local Governments spend 18% of their revenue capacity on roads. This illustrates the dependence on State and Federal funding and many regional Local Governments would have to spend almost their entire income on roads if this was the only source of funding.

The statistics and analysis presented in the report provides evidence for the level of expenditure required on Local Government roads and underpins the argument for sustainable funding to maintain and improve the condition and functionality of the road network.

10.4 WALGA BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT ROUNDTABLE

By Sam Kennedy, Senior Policy Advisor - Emergency Management

NOTED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The second WALGA Bushfire Management Roundtable was held on 26 March, bringing together executive and subject matter experts from WALGA, LGIS, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), and Chief Executive Officers of Dandaragan, Albany, Manjimup, Corrigin, Kwinana, and Waroona Local Governments.
- Local Governments have a critical role in emergency management, including statutory responsibilities for mitigation, prevention and response and community-led recovery, necessitating well-functioning relationships with DFES as the Hazard Management Agency for multiple prescribed hazards.
- The Roundtable provides an opportunity for in-depth discussion of complex and/or contentious issues facing Local Governments in emergency management, and aims to identify, progress and monitor key priorities and actions.
- Discussions at the Roundtable were productive, identifying four actions for DFES and two for WALGA - focusing on further strengthening support to Local Government CEOs in Bush Fire Brigade (BFB) management, and strategic reform of the Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS).
- A short sector update from the Roundtable has been prepared for circulation to Members.
- The next Roundtable is anticipated to be held in early 2026.

ATTACHMENT

- [Sector Update - WALGA Bushfire Management Roundtable](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Bushfire Management Roundtable provided an opportunity to discuss issues related to WALGA's emergency management [advocacy positions](#):

- 8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Act
- 8.8 Local Government Grants Scheme
- 8.9 Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program
- 8.10 Management of Bush Fire Brigades

BACKGROUND

WALGA Bushfire Management Roundtables have been convened by WALGA to respond to an identified need for strengthened information flow between DFES and Local Government CEOs to support the fulfilment of their emergency management responsibilities.

The first Roundtable, held in February 2024, led to a collaborative project between DFES and WALGA, in which Local Government CEOs were provided with DFES training records for registered BFB members and a comprehensive information package, aimed at supporting CEO preparation for the upcoming bushfire season.

COMMENT

Key priorities and actions identified at the 26 March 2025 Roundtable include:

DFES Actions

- Continue to work with WALGA on the best ongoing approach to sharing information on BFB management with CEOs, including a more structured doctrine component to guide local policy development.
- Consider providing LGIS with access to relevant DFES doctrine to inform the provision of advice to Local Governments on BFB procedures, when requested by Local Governments.
- Continue to work with WALGA on LGGS reform, including a strategic approach to LGGS allocation.
- Provide updates/advice on management of burnt asbestos on farms and disaster recovery funding arrangements, recognising financial, WHS, environmental and recovery implications.

WALGA Actions

- Revisit Local Government views on BFB management in the 2025 EM Survey - anticipated to be delivered in September 2025.
- Continue to work with DFES on LGGS reform, including a strategic approach to LGGS allocation, whilst also continuing to advocate for an increase in funding, aligned to our 2025 State Election Priorities.

10.5 STATE BUDGET UPDATE

By Daniel Thomson, Manager Economics

NOTED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The State Budget was handed down on 19 June, with a focus on delivering election commitments, health, housing and economic infrastructure
- Announcements impacting Local Governments include regional roads, pedestrian safety, emergency management and biosecurity
- Further analysis is available on the [WALGA website](#) and in the [June Economic Briefing](#)

ATTACHMENT

- [WALGA's State Budget Analysis](#)
- [June Economic Briefing](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The State Budget funded a number of Local Government policy priorities that form part of WALGA's advocacy platform available in [The West at is Best](#) and the [Advocacy Manual](#).

BACKGROUND

Treasurer Hon Rita Saffioti MLA delivered the 2025-26 State Budget on 19 June, an unusually early release for an election year, signalling the State Government's intent to hit the ground running on its promises.

As expected, the Budget prioritised core election commitments, with major investments centred on immediate pressures, including easing the cost of living, boosting housing supply and affordability, and enhancing health and mental health services.

The Budget also reinforced the State Government's focus on its Made in WA agenda and infrastructure to support the diversification and decarbonisation of the economy.

Treasury is forecasting a budget surplus of \$2.5 billion in 2024-25 and \$2.4 billion in 2025-26 with the next three years also seeing budget surpluses above \$2 billion. Net debt is forecast to rise to \$42.5 billion, reaching 9.2% of Gross State Product. There are considerable risks to this forecast on the revenue side, in particular the volatility of the iron ore price and the reliance on China, which imports almost 75% of global iron ore. The Government is continuing to conservatively estimate the iron ore price in the Budget, a strategy that has consistently yielded revenue upgrades in previous years.

WALGA participated in the 2025-26 State Budget lockup, conducting a comprehensive review of the budget papers to evaluate their impact on Western Australian Local Governments. A summary of key announcements and detailed analysis was shared with all members on Budget night.

COMMENT

Although the State Government's decarbonisation initiatives are a positive step, there has been a noticeable shift away from broader climate action, particularly in the areas of adaptation and mitigation. While funding for programs like the Urban Greening Grants is

welcomed, WALGA has consistently advocated for greater investment on climate action in areas such as coastal erosion, and to support stronger partnerships that enhance climate resilience.

Despite this, the Budget did also deliver a number of priority election commitments for Local Governments.

WALGA worked hard to advocate for Local Government priorities through The West at its Best platform and is pleased to see funding provided in areas of importance to the sector.

- \$250 million for the Regional Road Safety Program
- An additional \$18.5 million over the forward estimates to increase the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme fuel subsidy rate from \$0.26 per kilometre to \$0.40 per kilometre
- \$8.5 million over 2025-26 and 2026-27 to install signalised pedestrian crossings at high-risk locations across the State
- \$3.5 million over 2025-26 to 2028-29 to expand the existing Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program by six Local Government employed CESMs
- An additional \$62.6 million over 2024-25 to 2027-28 on biosecurity incident and emergency management response activities
- A further \$5 million over 2025-26 to 2028-29 to support the establishment of the Office of the Local Government Inspector, bringing total funding to \$10.5 million over five years.

The WA economy is forecast to perform well despite the expectation of a global slowdown. In recent years the public sector has been a major source of economic growth with high levels of government investment and spending. This is expected to shift to the private sector as household spending grows along with business investment.

There are considerable risks to this forecast, particularly from the escalation of geopolitical conflict and ongoing trade tensions led by the US tariffs, particularly given WA's reliance on the resources sector which is exposed to global market forces. Domestically, housing supply issues and a tight labour market may hamper economic growth.

11 ORGANISATION REPORTS

11.1 KEY ACTIVITY REPORTS

11.1.1 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, ADVOCACY PORTFOLIO

By Rachel Horton, Executive Manager Advocacy

NOTED

The Advocacy Portfolio comprises the following work units:

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

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

1. MARKETING

In addition to promoting numerous WALGA events, a number of marketing campaigns are currently in progress.

Battery Waste Disposal Campaign

WALGA partnered with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) and the Household Hazardous Waste Program (HHWP) to raise awareness about the dangerous disposal of household batteries and offer a solution to the public.

WALGA supported existing advertising efforts by DWER with a digital marketing campaign. The key objectives were to create awareness around the multiple drop off zones across WA and decrease incorrect disposal of battery waste.

Over a six-week period more than 1.5 million impressions have been served to the WA public resulting in over 23,000 users clicking on 'Learn More' and converting over 19,500 visits to the 'Waste Sorted' page. This equates to an impressive 82% conversion rate which is far above the industry benchmark of 2-5%. Once on the website, 32% of visitors engaged with the post code finder tool to locate their nearest recycling drop-off location.

Diploma of Local Government

Marketing has commenced advertising for the Diploma of Local Government course for Officers (General and Planning stream). As well as WALGA owned channels and cross promotion in WALGA newsletters, targeted paid advertising has commenced across LinkedIn, Meta and Google.

2025 Local Government Election Campaign

Planning has commenced for the 2025 Local Government Election Campaign. WALGA is partnering with the DLGSC and WAEC, with WALGA leading the creative development and media planning. There are two objectives, to increase diversity of Councillor nominations and increase voter turnout.

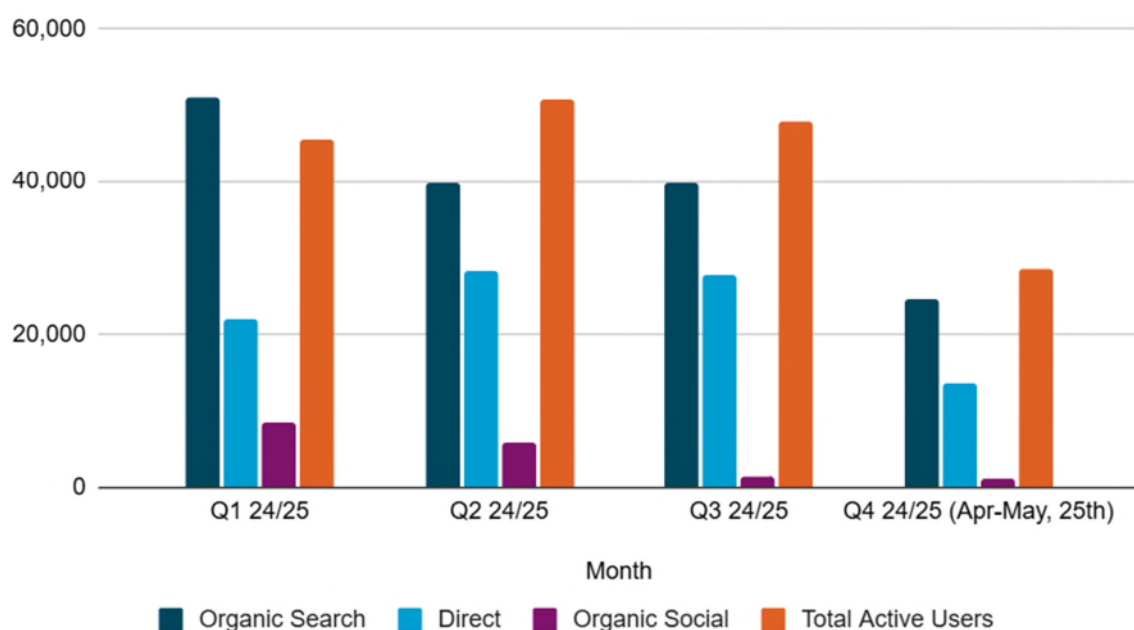
Event Marketing

Significant Marketing activity is underway to support a busy events season including the Renewable Energy Forum (12 June), an Elected Member Training Alumni Sundowner (12 June), the inaugural Emergency Management Forum (17 June), the Local Government Awards (19 July), People and Culture Seminar (25 July) and Transport & Roads Forum (14 August).

Website (NB: Partial Period: 1 April - 25 May)

With just over two thirds of quarter four captured within the reporting period the data is showing consistent performance. Direct traffic is strong with 57% resulting from organic search engine results. WALGA email alerts drive another 14% of traffic to the website and the remainder is driven by social media and referral links.

Quarterly Web Traffic by Source



2. COMMUNICATIONS

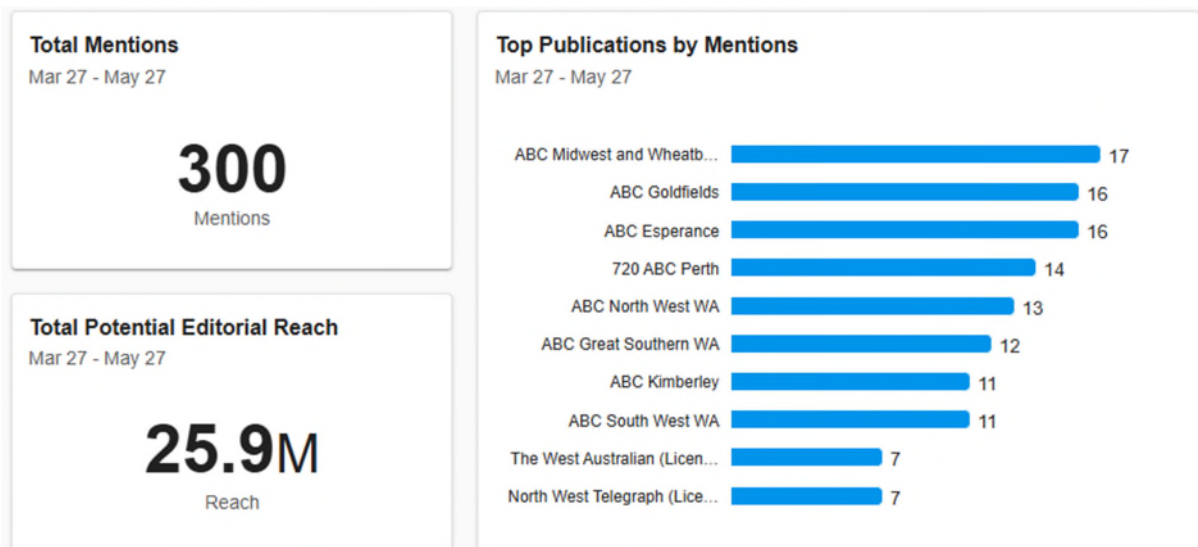
Multiple internal and external communications were prepared throughout the reporting period including:

- Eight LG Direct weekly newsletters distributed to over 2,000 Elected Members and Local Government staff
- Development of WALGA's Local Government Directory and Western Councillor Magazine
- WALGA's Quarterly Member Report
- 2025 Federal Budget Analysis

Work has also commenced on the 2024-25 Annual Report.

3. MEDIA

There were 300 mentions of WALGA and President Karen Chappel AM JP between Thursday, 27 March – Tuesday, 27 May. This is an increase from 216 in the previous reporting period. The majority of mentions were by the ABC Midwest and Wheatbelt, followed closely by ABC Goldfields and ABC Esperance.



Earned Media

WALGA received 18 media requests for comment across print, radio, television and online media illustrating the trust the media has in WALGA as a reliable voice on Local Government issues.

1. WA Tree Festival – 28 March
2. WALGA's Sustainable Energy Project – 3 April
3. E-Cigarette Collection Study – 8 April
4. WALGA's Model Local Planning Policy – 11 April
5. Zone Minutes – 15 April
6. Aboriginal Engagement – 15 April
7. WALGA's Sustainable Energy Project – 16 April
8. FOGO – 17 April
9. Responsible Authority Reports – 17 April
10. Housing – 17 April
11. RoadWise – 29 April
12. RoadWise – 1 May
13. Federal Election – 12 May
14. Tree Retention – 14 May
15. Puppy Farming Laws – 16 May
16. RoadWise – 19 May
17. Cat Act – 20 May
18. PSHB – 27 May

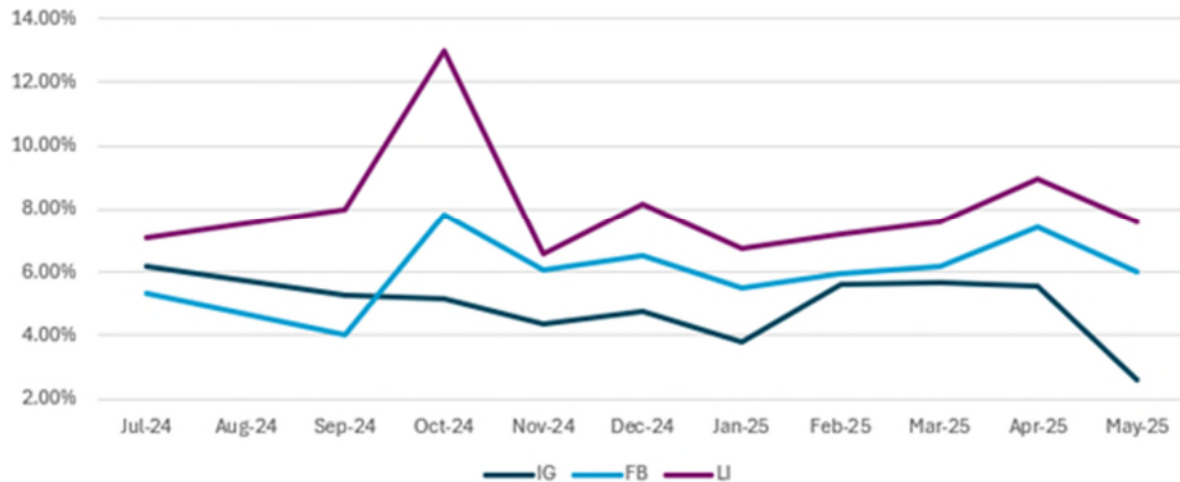
Media Releases

1. [WALGA advocacy answered with Coalition commitment to revitalise the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure \(LRCI\) Program](#) – 14 April
2. [Over \\$34 million in savings estimated for Local Government as Phase Two of WALGA's Sustainable Energy Supply Project commences](#) – 15 April
3. [Funding available to eligible WA Local Governments in fight against Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer](#) – 27 May

Social Media

Facebook and LinkedIn are tracking well with both spiking in April following content around the Aboriginal Engagement Forum. Instagram is mostly used for reels during events which is why there is less engagement post April.

Social Media Engagement %



LinkedIn has strong engagement at 8%, the highest posts being a congratulatory post for a Cert III cohort which achieved 41% engagement, followed by the Aboriginal Engagement Forum which achieved 28%. A post featuring WALGA State Council alongside Minister Beazley also generated 23% engagement.

Facebook has generated over 13,000 impressions and an average of 6% engagement and Instagram another 8,080 in the reporting period.

4. EVENTS

Three events are scheduled in June, two of which are inaugural events for WALGA.

Waste & Environment Summit

The Waste & Environment Summit scheduled for 4–5 June in Esperance was cancelled due to low registration numbers. A communications plan was developed to ensure all stakeholders were advised in a timely fashion and the decision was taken with sufficient time for attendees and speakers to recoup travel and accommodation costs. No costs were incurred by WALGA, and pre-prepared material is being shared online. The Advocacy and Policy portfolio will discuss future plans for the event.

Local Government Emergency Management Forum

The inaugural Local Government Emergency Management Forum will be held on Tuesday, 17 June at the Stirling Civic Centre. The event will bring together Local Government representatives and industry stakeholders to share strategies, build capability, and address current and emerging challenges in emergency management. The theme is 'Local Government future proof: Preparing today for tomorrow's challenges'. Hon Paul Papalia CSC MLA, Minister for Emergency Services will deliver the opening address.

People & Culture Seminar

This year's People & Culture Seminar, to be held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre is themed 'The 3 Cs of HR: Compliance, Compassion, Collaboration'. The program features leading Industrial Relations and Human Resources speakers from both the public and private sectors in WA. Registrations opened on 27 May.

2025 Local Government Convention

Planning is underway for the 2025 Convention, returning to the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on 22-24 September. The creative theme has been established with a marketing launch planned for June 2025 including Exhibitors and Sponsors.

11.1.2 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager Infrastructure

NOTED

The Infrastructure Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Roads*
- *Funding*
- *Urban and Regional Transport*
- *Asset Management*
- *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)

Guidelines for the use of crumbed rubber modified sprayed seals, reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) and a catalogue of standard pavement profiles have been published recently. Work has commenced on an investigation into available technologies for best practice road condition assessments and data collection and the development of a road safety rating tool for intersections.

Condition Assessment of Roads of Regional Significance

The condition assessment survey project for the Kimberley region is underway, with data collection ongoing. The project is anticipated to be completed by the end of June 2025. This will complete the assessment of the most regionally important Local Government roads across the State.

Road Rail Interface Agreements

Rail Interface Agreements are a requirement under the *Rail Safety National Law (WA)*. For road/rail interfaces on the Arc Infrastructure network, a model *pro forma* agreement between Local Governments and Arc Infrastructure has been drafted and agreed and is currently undergoing legal review by Arc Infrastructure and Main Roads WA. Once this is complete, the Agreement should be available for Local Government review and action. WALGA will begin a process to liaise with each relevant affected Local Government to provide advice around the new Agreement, prior to Arc Infrastructure dispatching the relevant Agreements to each Local Government.

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

Revised guides for calculating the cost of road wear for defined freight tasks on sealed and unsealed roads have been published on the [WALGA website](#). A downloadable excel calculator that will guide practitioners through the methodology has also been developed. This second edition reflects significant escalation in road construction costs.

2. ROAD FUNDING

Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) Model Revisions

The WALGA Infrastructure Team is working with the Regional Road Groups to harmonise the MCA models used by Regional Road Groups to prioritise projects for Road Project Grant funding. 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. All the Regional Road Groups have commenced the MCA revision process, with the process in the Gascoyne, Great Southern, and SW region now complete.

3. TRANSPORT

Bus Stop Infrastructure

The Bus Stop Infrastructure Agreement has been finalised, with the formal signing scheduled for June.

Active Transport and Micromobility-Discussion Paper

WALGA recently hosted two Active Transport workshops on 6 March with high-level stakeholders, and a follow-up online workshop for Local Government officers on 2 April. These sessions provided valuable insights into the gaps and challenges in active transport across the sector. This work now forms the foundation for the next stage, which will focus on developing a formal policy position to guide and support active transport initiatives in Local Government.

4. ASSET MANAGEMENT

Road Assets and Expenditure (RAE) Report Project

With the completion of a final report detailing the current processes used to develop the RAE Report and identifying options for improvement in data collection, interpretation, and presentation, work is now ongoing to prepare tender materials and commence the project to achieve the future state of the RAE process. This phase will include the development of a database, reporting interface, and dashboard.

5. Utilities

Underground Power

The Targeted Underground Power Program (TUPP) working group, including Western Power, Energy Policy WA and WALGA, continued to develop options to support the viability of the program that is facing increasing costs. Particular focus is on reducing the project cost risks and identifying solutions to respond to those property owners in hardship situations. Two projects from the previous Network Renewal Program remain to be delivered, with the first TUPP project scheduled for commencement late in 2025-26.

Streetlighting

The pilot phase of the Proactive Streetlight Replacement Program has commenced with LED streetlights being installed in selected suburbs in the Cities of Cockburn, Melville and Kwinana. A Ministerial announcement is anticipated regarding the delivery of the next phase of the Program. WALGA provided feedback to the consultant engaged by Western Power to undertake a survey of Local Governments regarding aspects of streetlighting that are most important. It is not clear when the survey will be undertaken.

Telecommunications

WALGA will contribute to a regional telecommunications policy workshop organised by WA Farmers Federation and Telstra.

6. ROAD SAFETY

RoadWise Recognised

76 Local Governments are registered RoadWise Councils. The RoadWise Recognised Advisory Committee met in February and May. Points, which signify road safety actions undertaken, were considered for 72 (95%) of RoadWise Councils who together recorded more than 200 activities each quarter. The Points that were allocated reflected actions delivered across the different areas of the [RoadWise Framework](#). The spread of activity demonstrates how holistic the approach to road safety across governance, management, and operations has been and is acknowledged with the awarding of RoadWise Recognised Ribbons, up to a maximum of five. In this way, the allocation of Points and Ribbons is designed to encourage local road safety toward better and ultimately best practice.

11.1.3 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, MEMBER SERVICES PORTFOLIO

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

NOTED

The Member Services Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Association and Corporate Governance*
- *Commercial Services*
- *Commercial Development and Management (Preferred Supplier Program)*
- *Employee Relations*
- *Governance and Procurement*
- *Training*

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

1. ASSOCIATION AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Local Government Honours Program 2025

Nominations for the 2025 Honours Program have closed and the Panel have selected this year's recipients. The 2025 Program continued the success of previous years with many outstanding nominations across six award categories.

WALGA's Honours Program affords public recognition and celebration to the outstanding achievements and lasting contributions made by Elected Members and employees to their respective Councils, the Local Government sector, the Association and the wider community. Thank you to all those who nominated someone for this year's Program.

Recipients for the 2025 Program will be recognised at an awards event on Saturday, 19 July at the WA Museum Boola Bardip.

2. COMMERCIAL

Preferred Supplier Program

The Preferred Supplier Program continues to develop with supplier additions, and new category development. A legal review to update contractual documentation has commenced.

A project to develop guidance resources and information about Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Council Business Systems has been initiated. This activity will support the use of the WALGA Panel for procurement and contracting processes.

Phase two of the WALGA Sustainable Energy Supply Project has been successfully implemented. The new term of the project involves 50 WALGA Members and incorporates a diversification strategy to further support sustainable energy infrastructure development.

ARENA/EV Projects

The ARENA project continues to progress through a reporting and knowledge-sharing phase. There are no significant matters to update.

Through ongoing work to explore potential new opportunities for external funding of Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure, WALGA has been working with the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS) to engage with a small number of Local Governments in the Mid-West and surrounding regions on potential delivery arrangements for additional public EV Charging infrastructure. This work has provided an excellent opportunity to work with DEMIRS to explore potential future funding and delivery mechanisms, considering the specific needs and priorities of members.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Project

The Sector AI Readiness Assessment is now well underway. Following an open tender process, The Strategy Group has been appointed to undertake the sector readiness assessment, as well as more detailed assessments of 12 participating member Local Governments. Consistent with practice of the Office of the Auditor General, the Local Governments subject to the detailed assessments will not be publicly identified in updates or reporting.

Briefing engagements and a webinar were held in mid-May. Member engagement will ramp up into June. While the key findings will be reported back to the sector, the specific format of this reporting may depend on the findings and outcomes of the assessments.

This work is expected to inform the Association's potential future initiatives related to AI and cybersecurity.

3. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

WALGA ER continues to represent the sector in a number of applications in the WA Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) including:

Applications CICS 5, 8 and 9 of 2023 - Union demarcation dispute.

Application IAC 2 of 2025 - Industrial Appeal Court appeal

These applications relate to a dispute over coverage of Local Government employees between three unions, the Western Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union of Employees (WASU), Local Government, Racing and Cemeteries Employees Union (LGRCEU) and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union of Workers (CFMEUW).

The matter has had 20 hearing days to date in July and October 2024, with the CFMEUW evidence still to be completed. further 20 hearing days is anticipated.

During the hearing in October 2024 the CFMEUW made a number of applications:

- a) The first application was to dismiss the matter, which the Commission rejected and dismissed.
- b) The second application was for discovery of documents from WALGA and the WASU, which the Commission ordered and WALGA and WASU complied with. WALGA and WASU have claimed privilege over these documents (**Privilege Claim**).
- c) A further application for discovery of documents from WALGA, WASU and the LGRCEU. In response the WASU, LGRCEU and WALGA applied to dismiss the

CFMEUW's second application for production of documents. This was dismissed by the CICS on 26 March 2025 (Dismissal Decision).

The CFMEUW have lodged an appeal to the Industrial Appeal Court (**IAC**) against the Dismissal Decision (IAC 2/2025). Programming orders have been issued but a hearing date has not been set and is unlikely to be before September 2025. The IAC is comprised of three WA Supreme Judges.

The Privilege Claim will be heard by the CICS as an interlocutory matter on 28 May 2025. The substantive application will be relisted at a later point.

The various applications for production of documents by the CFMEUW and to dismiss the matter have caused significant delays to the substantive matter in this case and result in continued uncertainty in the Local Government sector generally as to the CFMEUW's coverage and role.

Application APPL 164 of 2024

An application was made by the WASU through s80BH of the *Industrial Relations Act 1979* (WA) (IR Act) to be named to the Local Government Industrial Award – Industrial Agreement (LGIA-IA) which is an instrument that transitioned to the State Industrial Relations system. If WASU is named to the LGIA-IA it is then able to take action to enforce the instrument, but more importantly the WASU could 'retire' it under s. 41(7) of the IR Act and the state awards (LGO and ME Awards amongst others) would then apply.

Sixty Local Governments have been named to APPL 164 of 2024 and WALGA is directly representing the Shire of Dundas (lead Local Government) as their industrial agent in this matter and assisting other Local Governments. WALGA filed a response on behalf of the Shire of Dundas on 17 January.

On 5 March the WASU lodged an application to dismiss the Respondent's response filed in this matter on the basis that the objections of the Respondents have no real prospect of success and the matter should proceed without hearing further from the Respondents.

A directions hearing was heard on 17 March where the WASU's application to dismiss the Respondent's objections was dismissed and that the preliminary issue should be subject to a hearing.

The matter was heard on 13 May 2025. The Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS) on behalf of the Minister for Industrial Relations applied and was granted leave to intervene in the hearing of this matter. The position put forward by the Minister was consistent with WALGA's position.

The decision has been reserved.

Application CICS 1 of 2025 - 2025 State Wage Case

Annually the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) in Court Session issues a decision setting the WA minimum wage.

WALGA submitted a written submission on behalf of the Local Government sector which provided 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.

A hearing was held on 21 May 2025 and WALGA provided oral submissions, along with DEMIRS (on behalf of the Minister for Industrial Relations), Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Unions WA and the WA Council of Social Service.

WALGA submitted that consideration should be given to 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.

The matter will be relisted when the annual wage review of the Fair Work Commission has been handed down for any final submissions.

4. GOVERNANCE AND PROCUREMENT

Local Government Elections Working Group

WALGA is again representing Member's interests in an Elections Working Group convened by the Department of Local Government, with WA Electoral Commission (WAEC). The Working Group supports the WAEC in planning for and conducting elections on behalf Local Governments. WALGA will again coordinate public notice information for the small number of Local Governments not using the WAEC to conduct their elections, for publication on the DLGSC's website, fulfilling in part the Local Government's public notice requirements

Local Government Elections - Owners and Occupier Electoral Roll Webinar

WALGA's Governance Team co-hosted a webinar with Department of Local Government, on Wednesday, 4 June 2025. The webinar was targeted at officers, informing about Local Government Act reforms that have substantially changed evidence requirements and the way owner and occupier eligibility claims are to be assessed by Local Government CEOs. A recording of the webinar is available by contacting WALGA Governance.

Local Government Elections - Owners and Occupier Electoral Roll Eligibility Guide

WALGA's Guide for processing owner and occupier eligibility claims has been substantially re-written to reflect the Local Government Act reforms. The WALGA Guideline is available online to WALGA Governance subscribers.

Local Government Elections - Candidate briefings

WALGA is again liaising with the Department of Local Government and the WA Electoral Commission to provide an online Statewide Candidate Briefing webinar before candidate nominations open. The webinar is expected to be scheduled in mid-August, with nominations opening 28 August.

WALGA has also invited Local Governments to register their interest in WALGA providing an in-person or virtual presentation at local candidate briefings. WALGA will prioritise local candidate briefings jointly hosted by several Local Governments and depending upon our capacity, will consider individual briefings for a single Local Government.

Local Government Elections - Political Signage Guideline: Implied Constitutional Freedom of Political Communication

WALGA's *Political Signage Guideline* has been updated to include the latest information and case law. The Guideline considers the impact of the implied constitutional freedom of political communication on Local Government powers to regulate election signs. The Guideline is available for download by Governance subscribers.

Governance Alert and Procurement Newsletters

The first of a re-invigorated Governance Alert newsletter was circulated on 1 May to CEOs and officers that subscribe to WALGA's Governance subscription service. Topics covered included the above Local Government Elections webinars and guides, as well as Local Government Act reforms:

- Local Laws Reviews - new FAQ resource, to assist Local Governments to monitor and manage the mandatory reviews within prescribed timeframes.
- Committee Presiding Member Appointments required before 1 July 2025.
- *Local Government (Development Assessment Panel) Regulations 2025* - template authorisations to assist CEOs to authorise employees to prepare Responsible Authority Reports.
- Caretaker Provisions - raising awareness the Caretaker Provisions and limitations on significant acts apply from 4pm, 4 September 2025 (close of nominations).
- Information about Local Governments providing continuing professional development in the final months of a Council Member's term of office.

Governance newsletters and Procurement newsletters will continue to be circulated on a regular basis to Governance and Procurement subscribers (respectively).

5. TRAINING

The April intake had five students start their Certificate III in Local Government. Feedback of the program continues to be positive.

Based on feedback from the sector, WALGA has lodged a Notice of Intent with the State Training Board for the Certificate III in Local Government being available as a School Based Traineeship (SBT) in addition to our application to have the Diploma of Local Government made available as an existing worker Traineeship. This is currently under review and is awaiting the endorsement of the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. This application is the first of multiple steps and does not guarantee funding through the Department of Training and Workforce Development.

Planning for a large intake for the Diploma of Local Government – Elected Member program in November is underway. The Jacqui Dodd Scholarship will open on 1 July and close 15 August. The scholarships will be awarded at the AGM of the WALGA Convention, together with the graduation ceremony for students of the Diploma of Local Government - Elected Member.

11.1.4 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, POLICY PORTFOLIO

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager, Policy

NOTED

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 last State Council meeting.

1. ECONOMICS

Renewable Energy

Rating research paper

Work is underway on a research paper that explores Local Government rating of renewable energy facilities. The paper will include:

1. Legislative Framework Review - to determine the current legislative provisions available to WA Local Governments and provide recommendations for any legislative changes in relation to the rating of renewable energy facilities.
2. National and Local Review - to research how other Australian jurisdictions are managing the rating of renewable energy facilities and consult with a selection of Western Australian Local Governments.
3. Way Forward - provide a summary of options and recommendations for the rating of renewable energy facilities by Local Governments going forward.

Political and Government engagement

The WALGA President and CEO have met with the new Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation; Manufacturing; Skills and TAFE; Pilbara, Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson BA MLA, and the Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works; Health Infrastructure, Hon John Carey BA MLA.

Renewable Energy Ministerial Forum

In June, WALGA supported the Renewable Energy Ministerial Forum with addresses from Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Minister for Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation; Manufacturing; Skills and TAFE; Pilbara and Hon John Carey MLA, Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works; Health Infrastructure. The Ministers addressed Local Governments on their plans for the renewable energy transition and the State Government's priorities. This was followed by a roundtable discussion with Minister Sanderson and a workshop session conducted by PoweringWA, focusing on community benefits.

Community Benefits and Engagement Guide

WALGA has completed the development of its Community Benefits and Engagement Guide (see [item 10.2](#)). This guide is designed to offer clear and concise direction to the Local Government sector on how to navigate the challenges of community engagement and

delivering community benefits in the context of large-scale renewable energy projects. To support practical implementation, the guide is accompanied by a suite of templates and checklists, providing Local Governments with ready-to-use tools to assist in their planning and engagement efforts.

2. ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE

WA PSHB Tree Recovery program

The State Government's [WA Tree Recovery Local Government Grant Program](#) opened on 26 May, with applications closing on 7 July 2025. The Grant Program is designed to support the replacement of trees removed due to PSHB infestation and improve long-term canopy cover by planting at a ratio of three trees to every one tree removed, where possible. Up to \$1,140 is available for each tree removed, which includes one primary replacement tree, two additional trees and eligible establishment items and services (including understory plants). Funding of up to \$150,000 per planting site is available to assist with high-cost replacement planting sites in specific circumstances. Grants will be awarded in August 2025 to enable Local Governments to order tree and understory stock for planting across the 2026, 2027 and 2028 planting seasons.

WALGA advocated strongly for tree recovery funding and has welcomed the commencement of the Grant Program, while reaffirming the need for further ongoing funding and measures to intensify Local Government PSHB response efforts and further protect and grow our tree canopy. WALGA's media release can be found [here](#).

H5 Bird Flu

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is leading the development of the WA Response Plan for H5 Bird Flu. WALGA is actively engaging in this process along with a range of State Government agencies. WALGA participated in a national Carcass Management Workshop (8 May) with other States and Territories and was the only voice representing Local Government. The workshop identified key resources required for the response.

WALGA has established a cross-organisational team to ensure the Association has a coordinated approach in relation to preparedness, response and recovery. DPIRD presented on H5 Bird Flu preparedness to State Council at its Information Forum on 4 June.

3. PLANNING AND BUILDING

Urban Greening Priority Projects – Funding Agreement

WALGA has recently finalised a funding agreement with the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) for three priority urban greening projects to be delivered in 2025. Project implementation is supported by a funding allocation of \$90,900 (ex GST) from the WAPC.

WALGA developed detailed project scopes and budgets for three priority urban greening projects, as identified by the Local Government Urban Forest Working Group in late 2024.

The priority projects are:

- Climate ready street tree trials
- Creation of a Perth and Peel urban forest spatial mapping layer
- A guide on structural engineering options to support root management and tree growth.

The WAPC is providing financial support for urban greening demonstration projects in the Perth and Peel metropolitan region, which is intended to contribute to the achievement of the State Government's Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy, currently under development.

WALGA, through the Urban Forest Facilitator, is the project coordinator and has established Steering Groups for each project. Steering Groups comprise representatives from the UFWG, DPLH and other targeted stakeholders such as State Government, research organisations and peak representative bodies. Steering Group members will provide specialist knowledge and guidance to ensure a collaborative, shared approach to project implementation.

4. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

WALGA 2025 Local Government Emergency Management Forum

WALGA will hold its first Local Government Emergency Management Forum on 17 June at the City of Stirling Reception Hall. The theme for the Forum is *Local Government Future Proof: Preparing today for tomorrow's challenges*. Hon Paul Papalia CSC MLA, Minister for Emergency Services will address the Forum which will include a diverse range of speakers and panellists across three sessions: community disaster resilience, crisis communication, and recovery lessons learned.

Delegates will also hear from an array of Local Government emergency management practitioners, sector leaders and change makers. More information and the registration link are available [here](#).

Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Program

WALGA has launched its pilot project with five Local Governments selected through an Expression of Interest process in February 2025. The selected councils include the Shires of Manjimup, Shark Bay, Chittering and Gingin and the City of Kwinana.

The pilot objectives are to:

- Test and refine templates and resources.
- Identify challenges in achieving LEMA endorsement.
- Gather input for user guidelines on Local Arrangements.
- Identify and collect additional support tools/resources used by Local Governments.

The pilot is expected to run until August, after which a review and report will be prepared for State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) on the outcomes.

SEMC has endorsed DFES to proceed with the development and testing of a LEMA Development Framework, aiming for a more scalable approach to LEMA development and review. This delivers on WALGA's 2023 recommendation to establish a maturity assessment model.

5. COMMUNITY

Aboriginal Elected Member Roundtable

WALGA hosted its first Aboriginal Elected Member Roundtable on 8 April, the day before the Aboriginal Engagement Forum. The event was very successful, with 15 Elected Members attending (out of 28 invited) from 12 diverse Local Governments across WA. The Roundtable has provided direction to WALGA as we strive to increase the cultural competency, safety and access to our services and support for current and prospective Aboriginal Elected Members. At the WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum on 9 April, Lanie Chopping, Director General DLGSC, committed to working with WALGA to increase representation and support Aboriginal Elected Member candidates. WALGA intends to make the Roundtable an annual event.

Aboriginal Engagement Forum (AEF)

This year's event, held on 9 April, was a resounding success with highly positive feedback from delegates, sponsors and collaborators. Tickets sold out at the venue's capacity of 258, and a waitlist was required. Delegates from 54 Local Governments (representing 16 Zones) attended, including 8 State Councillors, 33 Elected Members and 12 Aboriginal Elected Members. Critical to the success of the 2025 AEF was the strong focus on programming and the guidance of the Reference Group. The refreshed Reference Group had a 75% Aboriginal representation, and Aboriginal presenters accounted for 80% of the programming. The inclusion of an outdoor Yarning Space also elevated the event, providing an outdoor hub for delegates to network, enjoy food and engage directly with selected stakeholders and event sponsors. Delegates provided very positive feedback through our post-event survey, with all sessions receiving a 90% approval rating of 4 out of 5 or above.

Public Health Planning

The [State Public Health Plan 2025-2030](#) was published on the 4 June and provides the strategic framework that Local Governments must consider within their Local Public Health Plans due by 4 June 2026. WALGA is actively engaging with a range of stakeholders that are developing public health planning resources to ensure these supports are responsive to the needs and priorities of Local Governments. WALGA has surveyed Local Government officers working on Local Public Health Plans to better understand the needs of the sector. The feedback from stakeholders will support the development of a tailored WALGA Local Public Health Planning masterclass series for delivery in the second half of 2025. This series will target the operational needs of Local Governments and address gaps in information and support identified in the engagement phase.

Child Safeguarding Reportable Conduct Scheme

Following the release of the Ombudsman's [Western Australia's Reportable Conduct Scheme: A review of systems to protect children](#) report, WALGA partnered with the Ombudsman's Reportable Conduct Scheme to deliver an information webinar and in-person workshop on the Local Government Reportable Conduct Scheme. These sessions were targeted at Local Government CEOs and Executives who are responsible for conducting investigations into allegations of reportable conduct by Local Governments.

11.2 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The [President's Report](#) was made available at the time the Agenda was published.

NOTED

11.3 CEO'S REPORT

The CEO's Report was circulated to State Councillors with the Revised Agenda (under separate cover).

NOTED

12 ADDITIONAL ZONE RESOLUTIONS

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly
Seconded: President Cr Phillip Blight

That the additional Zone Resolutions from the June round of Zones meetings as follows be referred to the appropriate portfolio for consideration and appropriate action.

RESOLUTION 047.3/2025

CARRIED

CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE (Infrastructure Portfolio)

Concerns Regarding the Delays in Electrical Connections by Western Power – Impact on Regional Development in Brookton

That the Central Country Zone request State Council to:

1. Engage with Western Power to review and improve timelines for electrical connections, particularly in regional areas;
2. Prioritise connections for essential infrastructure, residential housing, and commercial investment projects; and
3. Consider additional resourcing or regional service delivery strategies to ensure timely support for regional development.

CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Polyphagous shot-hole borer

That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to:

1. Call on the State Government to appropriately fund the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development given that the 2025-26 State Budget shows that investment in the Department will drop by \$166m in 2026-27 (35%) and be lower than the investment in 2023-24 which was insufficient to respond to the Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer.

2. Noting; The 2025-26 budget provides just \$50,000 for 'Biosecurity Incident and Emergency Management Response' grants in 2026-27 and no funding in the further out-years.

EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy, Member Services and Infrastructure Portfolios)

Advocacy for Improved Action and Communication from State Government Agencies

That the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) East Metropolitan Zone requests that WALGA prioritise their advocacy to the State Government for the following:

1. Improved management and decisive action from the Department of Communities and the Department of Housing in dealing with problem tenancies within their social and community housing properties, including greater support and wrap around services to assist those vulnerable members of the community.
2. Improved communications between the Department of Communities, the Department of Housing and Local Government Authorities when dealing with issues that arise from social and community housing properties.
3. The development of a fair formula to ensure the State Government and its agencies continue to pay rates on all State-owned or State-agency owned land used for social and community housing purposes across the State, regardless of who develops, operates, or is granted use of the land, including not for profits and charitable organisations.
4. Increased funding for underground power and expedite the rollout of the LED replacement programme across the State, particularly in low socio-economic areas.

GASCOYNE COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Waste Management Funding Advocacy

That the Gascoyne Country Zone:

1. Request WALGA to advocate for funding and support for regional collaboration on waste management; and
2. Seek WALGA's advice and assistance in identifying funding opportunities and facilitating independent coordination to support regional waste initiatives.

NORTH METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

'Place' Advocacy – Seeking Increased Consideration of 'Sense of Place' through the Planning and Development Process

That the North Metropolitan Zone requests the Western Australian Local Government Association advocate to the State Government for increased consideration of sense of place and place-based outcomes through the planning and development system.

PEEL COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Places of Bushfire Last Resort

That the Peel Country Zone:

1. supports the development of draft guidelines for Places of Bushfire Last Resort by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services; and
2. requests WALGA's active engagement to identify and address risks associated with Places of Bushfire Last Resort, engage and lead local government consideration and assist the development of a solution for local governments across Western Australia.

SOUTH EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Bushfire Risk Management on Crown Land

That WALGA adopts the following Advocacy Position:

1. The Crown should be bound by the *Bush Fires Act 1954* and any new consolidated emergency services legislation.
2. Regardless of whether the Crown is bound by legislation, Government agencies should be directed and resourced to proactively manage bush fire risk on Crown land, particularly where that land is located in close proximity to residential developments.

SOUTH WEST COUNTRY ZONE (Infrastructure Portfolio)

Advocacy for Improved Telecommunications and Internet Coverage in the South West Region

That the South West Zone requests the State Council to advocate for tangible actions to improve telecommunication and internet coverage throughout the South West to meet current and future demands, taking into account:

- forecast population increases
- planning for future development
- increasing community reliance on digital capabilities for everyday life (residents and businesses)
- seasonal tourism swells
- increasing emergency service response and management requirements
- the need to enable transformational business and industry to evolve and thrive in the regions.
- engagement with relevant State and Federal Governments to identify the appropriate governing or regulatory body responsible for overseeing telecommunications providers in emergency management contexts and supporting, through Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMC) membership where the local government deems necessary, their regular and meaningful participation in LEMCs.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the WALGA State Council will be a Regional Meeting, hosted by the Goldfields Esperance Country Zone in the Shire of Dundas, on Friday, 5 September commencing at 11:00am.

14 CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5:30pm.

STATUS REPORT ON STATE COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
7 May Item 8.1 Regulations for CEO KPIs and Online Registers – WALGA Submission	That WALGA endorse the recommendations contained in the attached ' <i>Regulations for CEO KPIs and public registers submission</i> ', subject to strengthening recommendation 1c to highlight the additional software and resource implications to the sector due to the introduction of public registers. RESOLUTION 026.2/2025	Submission lodged with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries on 7 May.	May 2025	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
7 May Item 8.2 Dog and Cat Management Advocacy Position	That WALGA replace Advocacy Position 2.12 <i>Puppy Farming</i> with a revised <i>Dog and Cat Management</i> advocacy position, as follows: <i>In regard to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Act 2021 and the PetsWA Centralised Database, the WA Local Government sector advocates:</i> a) <i>that all Local Governments achieve full cost recovery in ensuring compliance with the Dog Act 1976 or Cat Act 2011 through a combination of appropriate fees and State Government funding that encourages compliance and serves the interests of all Western Australians regardless of where they live.</i> b) <i>that Fees and Charges set in Regulations are reviewed bi-annually and, at minimum, adjusted by the Local Government Cost Index.</i> c) <i>that the PetsWA centralised registration database is developed, operated and maintained by State Government, with no loss to Local Government registration fee revenue.</i> d) <i>that the function of PetsWA be restricted to the registration of dogs and cats, exclude ancillary functions such as animal related complaints and infringement notices, and integrate with existing Local Government corporate systems.</i>	Advocacy Positions Manual updated. A letter has been sent to the Minister for Local Government, advising of the State Council's updated advocacy position.	May 2025	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	e) <i>for the continued legislative exemptions for livestock working dogs in recognition of their special breeding requirements.</i> f) <i>for a State Government-led education initiative whereby the community is encouraged to purchase puppies from approved breeders.</i> RESOLUTION 027.2/2025			
7 May Item 8.3 Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations Advocacy Position	That WALGA replace the following Advocacy Positions: 5.2.1 Environmental Protection Act 5.2.2 Land Clearing in Road Reserves with an updated Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations Advocacy Position as follows: <i>WALGA calls on the Western Australian Government, in consultation with Local Government, to undertake legislative and policy reform to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the regulatory system for clearing native vegetation in Western Australia, including:</i> 1. <i>Amending the Environmental Protection Act 1986 and associated regulations to remove unnecessary process, complexity and improve timeframes, including:</i> a. <i>introducing statutory timeframes for the determination of referrals, permit applications and appeals</i> b. <i>increasing the default duration of Area and Purpose Permits to 10 years</i> c. <i>providing a permanent exemption for clearing of previously legally cleared transport corridors, including allowing Local Governments to clear for safety reasons.</i>	Advocacy Positions Manual updated. Correspondence sent to the Minister for the Environment with the updated position.	June 2025	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<i>d. strengthening environmental data sharing requirements to ensure proponents cannot opt-out of sharing data collected for environmental assessment and monitoring purposes.</i> <i>2. Ensuring the regulatory system is adequately resourced to:</i> <i>a. implement an expedited process for clearing permits for projects that prevent death and serious injury (road safety), and state and federally funded or co-funded projects</i> <i>b. establish a dedicated Local Government Unit within the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation to:</i> <i>i. case manage Local Government referrals and clearing permit applications</i> <i>ii. provide guidance and training for Local Governments, particularly in relation to roadside vegetation management</i> <i>iii. support partnerships with Local Governments in strategic environmental offsets</i> <i>c. enable timely investigation and enforcement action for illegal clearing</i> <i>d. increase investment in the collection and provision of statewide biodiversity data, including:</i> <i>i. funding and coordinating a state-wide biodiversity survey program to standardise habitat and vegetation mapping</i> <i>ii. making biodiversity data more discoverable, accessible and useable</i> <i>iii. ensuring survey data relied upon for decision making is contemporary and accurate, particularly if there has been a change in environmental condition.</i>			

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	3. Undertaking bioregional planning for native vegetation management, with a focus on highly cleared areas and implementing strategic solutions for environmental offsets that can be utilised by Local Government. 4. Ensuring that environmental offsets are relevant and proportionate, including: a. proximity to the area impacted b. the environmental value being impacted. 5. Working with the Australian Government to reduce duplication between the Environmental Protection Act 1986 and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. RESOLUTION 029.2/2025			
7 May Item 8.4 Submission on the State Recovery Arrangements	That State Council endorse the submission to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services on proposed revisions to the State Recovery Arrangements, subject to incorporating Advocacy Position 8.9 - Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program. RESOLUTION 030.2/2025	Submission lodged with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services on 8 May 2025.	May 2025	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
7 May Item 8.5 Health (Public Buildings) Regulations Consultation	That WALGA endorse the submission on Health (Public Buildings) Regulations Consultation to the Department of Health. RESOLUTION 031.2/2025	Submission lodged with the Department of Health on 7 May 2025.	May 2025	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
7 May Item 8.6 Submission for 2025 State Wage Case	That State Council endorse the WALGA 2025 State Wage Case submission to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission. RESOLUTION 032.3/2025	Submission lodged and accepted by the WAIRC on 13 May. WALGA presented the submission at a WAIRC hearing held on 21 May.	May 2025	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
7 May Item 8.7 Finance and Services Committee Minutes – 23 April 2025 - CONFIDENTIAL	That State Council endorse the Minutes of the Finance and Services Committee meeting held on 23 April 2025. RESOLUTION 033.2/2025	All items have been actioned.		Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
5 March Item 8.1 Climate Change Advocacy Position	That State Council refer this advocacy item back to the Environment Policy Team for further development. RESOLUTION 003.1/2025	At the 24 March Environment Policy Team meeting, it was agreed that WALGA would develop a consultation approach for consideration by the Policy Team. At the 29 May meeting, the Policy Team agreed to the proposed consultation approach, which involves providing the composite Advocacy Position to all Local Governments for a 10-week consultation period, with Council endorsed or CEO approved feedback preferred. An additional Policy Team meeting will be held to consider comments and a composite resolution.	May 2025	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
5 March Item 9.1 Infrastructure Policy Team Report	That State Council: 1. Note the report from the Infrastructure Policy Team for the 5 March 2025 meeting. 2. Determine to: a. Delete Advocacy Position 5.2.8 (Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2008 – 2020).	Advocacy Positions Manual updated. The Infrastructure Policy Team resolved to recommend WALGA engage an independent		Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	b. Amend the title of Advocacy Position 5.2.7 from Road Safety Strategy (Imagine Zero) to Driving Change Road Safety Strategy 2020-2030. 3. <u>Undertake further policy development and consultation with Members regarding the default open road speed limit in Western Australia.</u> RESOLUTION 013.1/2025	specialist to develop a framework to support the Local Government sector in decision making and advocacy relating to speed limits.		
6 December Item 8.1 2024 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	That: 1. the item 7.1 Amendments to <i>Cat Act 2011</i>- Allow Local Governments to Make Local Laws to Contain Cats to the Owner's Property be endorsed. ... 3. the following resolutions from the 2024 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the Governance Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: 7.2 Advocacy for Legislative Reforms to Counter Land-Banking 7.3 Advocacy for Expansion of Differential Rating to Include Long Term Unoccupied Commercial Buildings (Property Activation Levy). RESOLUTION 089.5/2024	Advocacy Positions Manual updated. Correspondence has been sent to the Minister for Local Government requesting the CAT Act be reviewed to provide Local Governments with the ability to contain cats on an owner's property. In addition, work has commenced on developing a template Cat Local Law to assist Local Government to make local laws to the extent of the current local law-making powers. Work on items 7.2 and 7.3 is being carried out and an update will be provided when complete.	Ongoing	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
6 December Item 8.1 2024 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	That: ... 2. the following resolutions from the 2024 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the	Resolution 7.2 (regarding the planning related items within this resolution): The demolition of single houses is generally a form of development exempt from		Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	Environment Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: 7.2 Advocacy for Legislative Reforms to Counter Land-Banking 7.4 Action on Asbestos for Western Australia 7.6 Advocacy for Accessibility. ... RESOLUTION 089.5/2024	requiring development approval, and only a demolition permit is required for the complete or partial demolition, dismantling or removal of a building or an incidental structure. The current planning and building legislation do not allow the conditioning of approval or refusal of a building permit in a manner proposed by the AGM resolution. Resolution 7.4: WALGA is engaging at the State and National level on this issue, including through membership of the WA Interagency Asbestos Group and nationally the Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency reference group and has raised the issues impacting Local Governments in relation to safe removal and disposal, including ensuring statewide options. Resolution 7.6: Liveable Housing Design Standard as part of the National Construction Code provides a set of technical provisions that if complied with enable dwellings to better meet the needs of the community, including older people and people with mobility limitations. The code specifies seven		

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
		minimum standards to ensure all new homes are accessible with modifications including step-free entrances and showers and wider doors and corridors that can accommodate wheelchairs and walking aids. All states enact the NCC through state legislation and regulation. A range of states are taking different approaches in terms of adopting the liveable housing requirements, but at time of writing all states except NSW and Western Australia have adopted the liveable housing provisions. The NCC 2022 only became operational in WA on 1 May. With the appointment of a new Commerce Minister following the 2025 State Election, WALGA will again raise the prospects of WA adopting the standard.		
6 December Item 8.2 Local Government Elections Advocacy Positions	That item 1 be deferred, and the Secretariat further investigate implications of compulsory and voluntary participation in Local Government elections and report back to State Council. RESOLUTION 090.5/2024 That WALGA adopt the following Elections Advocacy Positions:	Advocacy Positions Manual updated. Preparation of a report on implications of compulsory and voluntary participation in Local Government elections in progress.	Ongoing	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<i>The Local Government sector supports:</i> <i>1. Councillors serve four-year terms with elections every two years and half of the Council positions spilled at each election.</i> <i>2. First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) voting system for Local Government elections. If Optional Preferential Voting (OPV) remains as the primary method of voting, the sector supports the removal of the 'proportional' part of the voting method for general elections.</i> <i>3. First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) voting system for internal Council elections.</i> <i>4. Councils holding elections by means of in-person, postal and/or electronic voting.</i> <i>5. Current legislative provisions of Mayor/President of Class 1 and Class 2 Local Governments being directly elected by the community and Class 3 and Class 4 Local Governments determining whether its Mayor or President is elected by the Council or by the community.</i> RESOLUTION 091.5/2024	Letter written to Minister for Local Government advising on the five advocacy positions endorsed.		
6 December Item 8.6 Bus Stop Infrastructure Agreement	That State Council: 1. Provides in principle support for the proposed Bus Stop Infrastructure Partnership Agreement between WALGA and the Public Transport Authority 2024/25 to 2028/29. 2. Request the WALGA Secretariat negotiate with the Public Transport Authority seeking: a. Deletion of the word "typically" from Clauses 6.2, 8.1 (ii) and 8.6 (i) b. Indexation of funding provided under the Bus Shelter Subsidy Program (BSSP) and Bus Shelter	Following conclusions of discussions with the PTA, a revised agreement incorporating, to the extent possible the matters raised by State Council, was presented to the WALGA President and CEO for consideration and is scheduled for signing in mid-June.		Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	Maintenance Assistance Scheme (BSMAS) during or at the end of the Agreement 3. Authorise the WALGA President to sign the Bus Stop Infrastructure Partnership Agreement, on the completion of best endeavours to negotiate with the Public Transport Authority. 4. Refer the request for WALGA develop an advocacy position that Commonwealth Disability Standards have a provision for minimum standards of public transport shelter to the Infrastructure Policy Team. RESOLUTION 095.5/2024			