

State Council Full Minutes 1 May 2024

Ordinary meeting no. 2 of 2024 of the Western Australian Local Government Association State Council held at the City of Wanneroo, 23 Dundebur Road, Wanneroo at 12.30pm.

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1 OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1 OPENING

The Chair declared the meeting open at 12.32pm.

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 Gascoyne Country Zone Goldfields Esperance Country Zone Great Eastern Country Zone Great Southern Country Zone Murchison Country Zone North Metropolitan Zone North Metropolitan Zone Northern Country Zone Peel Country Zone Pilbara Country Zone South East Metropolitan Zone South Metropolitan Zone South Metropolitan Zone South Metropolitan Zone South West Country Zone	President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP Cr Paul Kelly President Chris Antonio President Cr Phil Blight Cr Kerry Smyth (Deputy) Cr John Daw (Deputy) President Eddie Smith President Cr Laurene Bonza Cr Stephen Strange Cr Scott Crosby President Cr Les Price Cr Lewis Hutton Cr Jacqui Huntley (Deputy) President Cr Kirrilee Warr Mayor Rhys Williams Cr Wendy McWhirter-Brooks Mayor Patrick Hall Mayor Logan Howlett JP Cr Karen Wheatland Cr Cliff Collinson (Deputy) President Cr Tony Dean
Ex Officio	The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor – City of Perth Local Government Professionals WA President	Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas Mr Anthony Vuleta
Guests	Chair, 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review	Hon Alannah MacTiernan
Observers	Pilbara Country Zone	President Audra Smith (Deputy)
Secretariat	Chief Executive Officer Executive Director Member Services Executive Manager Infrastructure Executive Manager Policy Executive Manager Advocacy Manager Association and Corporate Governance Executive Officer Governance	Mr Nick Sloan Mr Tony Brown Mr Ian Duncan Ms Nicole Matthews Ms Rachel Horton Ms Kathy Robertson Ms Meghan Dwyer

1.3 APOLOGIES

Central Metropolitan Zone	Cr Helen Sadler
East Metropolitan Zone	President Paige McNeil
East Metropolitan Zone	Cr Emily Wilding
Kimberley Country Zone	President Chris Mitchell
North Metropolitan Zone	Cr Michael Dudek
North Metropolitan Zone	Cr Bronwyn Smith
South East Metropolitan Zone	Cr Adam Hort
South Metropolitan Zone	Cr Barry Winmar

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 the land of the Whadjuk Noongar People, where we meet today, 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

3.1 HON ALANNAH MACTIERNAN – CHAIR, 2024 REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

The 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review has now commenced.

The Regional Telecommunications Review occurs every 3 years and is an opportunity to examine the existing and future telecommunication needs in regional, rural and remote communities across Australia.

The Review Committee is led by the Hon Alannah MacTiernan, as Chair. Mr Ian Kelly, Hon Fiona Nash, Dr Jessa Rogers and Ms Kristy Sparrow have also been appointed to the Committee.

The Committee has been asked to examine the adequacy of regional Australia's telecommunications, including hearing from people in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia. You can find out more about how the Committee will do this in the [Terms of Reference](#). The Committee will present its findings to the government by 31 December 2024.

For more information, [click here](#).

The Hon Alannah MacTiernan presented to State Council.

4 MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE STATE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 6 MARCH 2024

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Karen Wheatland

Seconded: Cr Scott Crosby

That the Minutes of the WALGA State Council meeting held on [6 March 2024](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

RESOLUTION 024.2/2024

CARRIED

4.1.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE STATE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2024

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.

- Cr John Daw declared an interest in Item 7.8 Selection Committee Minutes – 16 April 2024 and 17 April 2024

6 EMERGING ISSUES

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

10. ORGANISATION REPORTS

The following reports were brought forward in the Agenda.

10.4 EX OFFICIO REPORTS

10.4.1 CITY OF PERTH REPORT

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

The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas left the meeting at 1:32pm.

10.4.2 LG PROFESSIONALS REPORT

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

Mr Anthony Vuleta left the meeting at 1:40pm.

7 MATTERS FOR DECISION

7.1 WASTE LEVY ADVOCACY POSITION

By Rebecca Brown, Manager Waste and Environment

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

- 1. Replace the existing WALGA *Waste Levy Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.4 Waste Management Funding*:**

Local Government considers that:

- 1. Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy funds should be hypothecated to strategic waste management activities in line with the State Waste Strategy and strongly opposes the application of the Levy to non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities; and**
- 2. The Levy should not be applied to licensed landfills outside the metropolitan area.**

- 2. Endorse a new Waste Levy Advocacy Position as follows:**

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy (the Levy) was established in WA to fund programs relating to the management, reduction, reuse, recycling, monitoring or measurement of waste and administering the fund. The current Levy is applied to waste generated, or landfilled, in the Perth metropolitan area.

Currently, only 25% of the collected funds are retained for strategic waste management activities, 75% are allocated to the ongoing operations of the Department responsible for administration of the Levy.

Local Government considers that:

- 1. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy funds must be fully hypothecated to strategic waste management activities in line with the State Waste Strategy and not be used for non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities.**
- 2. Strategic waste management activities funded by the State Government should:**
 - a. Provide adequate funding and support for Regional Councils, non-metropolitan and metropolitan Local Governments;**
 - b. Reflect the targets and priorities within the Waste Strategy;**
 - c. Fully fund and acknowledge the life cycle costs of infrastructure and services; and**
 - d. Facilitate the development, implementation and ongoing operation of Product Stewardship Schemes.**
- 3. The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area as it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change.**

4. **The Levy should not be applied to waste received at premises undertaking licensed activities whose primary purpose is resource recovery.**
5. **The Levy must be supported by a clear, evidence-based rationale to demonstrate the suitability of how charges are set, how and where funds are allocated, and the extent to which it is delivering on its objectives.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Waste Levy and Strategic Waste Funding Policy Statement was first endorsed in 2008 and was amended in 2018.
- The Statement outlines the Local Government position on levies charged on the weight or volume of waste received at licensed premises and the application of those funds to waste management activities.
- In 2023, the WA Government published the findings of a Review of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (WARR) Levy. The consultation summary report and supporting consultant report can be accessed on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) [website](#).
- Key outcomes of the Levy Review included a five-year schedule of increases and a commitment to investigate extending the levy boundary to regional areas.
- The new Waste Levy Advocacy Position uses contemporary language emphasises:
 - Full hypothecation of the Levy;
 - The key areas of expenditure for the Levy;
 - Opposition to the expansion of the Levy's geographic application;
 - Opposition to the application of the Levy to resource recovery activities; and
 - The need for a clear evidence-based rationale for setting and expending the Levy.
- The Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) endorsed the new Advocacy Position in February 2024.

ATTACHMENT

- Waste Levy Policy Statement

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item rescinds the existing [Policy Statement](#) and [Advocacy Position](#):

7.4 Waste Management Funding

Local Government considers that:

1. *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy funds should be hypothecated to strategic waste management activities in line with the State Waste Strategy and strongly opposes the application of the Levy to non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities; and*
2. *The Levy should not be applied to licensed landfills outside the metropolitan area.*

A new Advocacy Position for the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy is proposed:

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy (the Levy) was established in WA to fund programs relating to the management, reduction, reuse, recycling, monitoring or measurement of waste and administering the fund. The current Levy is applied to waste generated, or landfilled, in the Perth metropolitan area.

Currently, only 25% of the collected funds are retained for strategic waste management activities, 75% are allocated to the ongoing operations of the Department responsible for administration of the Levy.

Local Government considers that:

1. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy funds must be fully hypothecated to strategic waste management activities in line with the State Waste Strategy and not be used for non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities.
2. Strategic waste management activities funded by the State Government should:
 - a. Provide adequate funding and support for Regional Councils, non-metropolitan and metropolitan Local Governments;
 - b. Reflect the targets and priorities within the Waste Strategy;
 - c. Fully fund and acknowledge the life cycle costs of infrastructure and services; and
 - d. Facilitate the development, implementation and ongoing operation of Product Stewardship Schemes.
3. The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area as it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change.
4. The Levy should not be applied to waste received at premises undertaking licensed activities whose primary purpose is resource recovery.
5. The Levy must be supported by a clear, evidence-based rationale to demonstrate the suitability of how charges are set, how and where funds are allocated, and the extent to which it is delivering on its objectives.

BACKGROUND

WALGA's [Waste Levy Policy Statement](#) and Advocacy Position 7.4 Waste Management Funding were first endorsed in 2008, and amended in 2018 following a review and to reflect the implementation of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 (State Waste Strategy).

The updated Advocacy Position has been updated to make the language more contemporary and outlines the Local Government position on levies charged on the weight or volume of waste received while undertaking licensed activities, and the application of those funds to waste management activities.

The key elements of the Advocacy Position remain, there is no support for the non-metropolitan application of the Levy and all funds raised through the Levy should be hypothecated to Strategic waste management activities.

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) endorsed the new Advocacy Position in February 2024.

COMMENT

Currently, 75% of Levy funds go to consolidated revenue with the remaining 25% hypothecated to the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (WARR) Account. A significant proportion of funds allocated to the WARR Account goes into funding ongoing operations of the Department. MWAC has identified the continued importance of full hypothecation of the Levy to strategic waste management activities. [WALGA's Budget](#)

[Submission](#) identifies the need for the full Levy amount to be expended on strategic waste management initiatives.

WALGA's 2020 [Submission](#) to the Levy Review reiterated key points of WALGA's position, in particular Local Governments' concern regarding a potential expansion of the levy to non-metropolitan areas. Following the Levy Review, DWER has advised it is preparing a consultation regulatory impact statement (CRIS) on options to expand the area where the WARR Levy applies. This is expected to be released for comment in 2024. The CRIS will examine the benefits, costs and financial impacts of expanding the area.

When the two Waste to Energy facilities begin operation, the amount of waste to landfill and consequently Levy generation will decrease. The State Government's long-standing position is that only residual waste is to be used for energy recovery following better practice source separation and does not propose to apply a levy on this material. The ongoing implementation and promotion of State Waste Strategy target initiatives such as Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) systems, community education and behaviour change programs and the Container Deposit Scheme are also expected to be reduce landfill volumes.

The State Budget projections for the Levy show a decreased income, but greater hypothecation of the Levy to the WARR Account to compensate for the reduced income. This will maintain the annual funding amount to the WARR account, which provides assurance for Local Government of ongoing support for waste initiatives. However, as a significant proportion of funds within the account are directed to the ongoing operations of DWER, WALGA will continue to argue strongly for full hypothecation of levy funds to strategic waste management activities.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Murchison Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation supported

EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE

Amend as follows:

- Part 2(d) to be: Facilitate the monitoring and compliance of Product Stewardship Schemes.
- Remove Part 3 being:
The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area as it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Part 2(d) - This amendment was also raised at the South Metropolitan Zone meeting and the rationale included that:

Product Stewardship Schemes are under review by the Federal Government and ultimately will require manufacturers, producers and distributors to deliver a circular economy approach to their products. As such the State and Local governments should not be the implementers of such schemes, but rather simply ensure compliance wherever possible.

While the preference is for national Product Stewardship, given most products are sold into a national market, there have been instances where national Schemes have not progressed, and it has been vital for the State Government to implement Product Stewardship. There is also a head of power to implement such Schemes in the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007*.

Containers for Change is a key example of the failure of a national container deposit scheme to be developed and the need for the State Government to implement a Scheme. There could also be instances where particular products are an issue in Western Australia, but not nationally, so a WA approach would be required.

If the Federal Government is implementing Product Stewardship Schemes, under the *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020*, they should also be responsible for the monitoring and compliance of these schemes.

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended

Remove Part 3 - WALGA's position has consistently opposed the application of the Levy to the non-metropolitan area. The rationale is outlined in the Advocacy Position – "it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change".

The application of the Levy to these areas would increase the costs to manage waste but provide no further resourcing to reduce waste generation or manage waste in a different way. The Local Governments in the non-metropolitan area may have very limited ability to raise their rates and if the Levy were applied, even at a lower rate, they would need to pay the Levy and then find additional funds to cover the costs of programs to reduce waste/increase resource recovery.

As identified in WALGA's Submission on the [Waste Levy Review \(2020\)](#), other considerations include that the drivers that led to the implementation of the Levy in the metropolitan area are not considered to be present in non-metropolitan areas. These drivers included the generation of large amounts of waste in a concentrated area, limited suitable landfill space in close proximity to the source of waste and limited viable alternatives to manage recovered material.

Local Governments have also expressed concern that the way in which the Levy has been implemented and enforced in the metropolitan area, has not provided non-metropolitan Local Governments with confidence that the State Government has the capacity or resources to address issues associated with an expansion of the Levy.

It has been raised previously that the non-metropolitan area should not access the Levy if it is not paying it. In response, there are many taxes or levies which are raised in one area and spent in another. The non-metropolitan area receives only a very small proportion of the Levy. Analysis of last three years of accessible Levy related information, shows that between 1.8% to 7.3% of the Levy was expended in the non-metropolitan area.

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended.

NORTH METROPOLITAN ZONE

Add a new Part 6:

Unless hypothecated, the levy should be reduced by 75% to allow LGAs to use these funds for their own strategic waste management.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

There are mechanisms within the Local Government Act for funds to be quarantined for specific activities, such as waste management. If this amendment was supported, in line with Local Governments requirements for State Government, the use of the funds could only be for strategic waste initiatives and could not replace ongoing operational funding (as has occurred with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation).

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended.

PEEL COUNTRY ZONE

Amend Parts 3 and 4 as follows:

3. The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area as it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas where there is no access to alternatives to landfill.
4. The Levy should not be applied to waste received at premises undertaking licensed activities whose primary purpose is resource recovery, including waste to energy.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Part 3 - The Zone has highlighted that in some areas Landfill is the only option and this is certainly a consideration regarding why the Levy is not supported. However, the current Advocacy Position wording identifies the range of considerations which make the application of the Levy to non-metropolitan areas problematic. The proposed wording implies that alternatives to landfill is the only consideration, and consequently if there were access to alternatives then application of the Levy could be appropriate.

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended.

Part 4 - This is addressed in the Policy Statement which defines resource recovery, including waste to energy - "resource recovery (such as materials recovery facilities (MRFs), green waste processing facilities and waste to energy facilities (WTEs)".

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended.

SOUTH METROPOLITAN ZONE

Amend as follows:

- Add a new Part 2 (e) as follows:
Facilitate potential monitoring and compliance of Product Stewardship Schemes.
- Delete Part 3
 3. The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area as it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change.
- Amend Part 4 to read:
The Levy should be applied to all waste that is landfilled within the metropolitan area.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Part 2 (e) - The current Advocacy Position identifies that the funds can be applied to “the development, implementation and ongoing operation of Product Stewardship Schemes”. This could include monitoring and compliance activities, if the State developed and implemented a Scheme.

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended.

Remove Part 3

As per East Metropolitan Zone Comment.

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended.

Amend Part 4 - The Levy applies to all waste that is generated, or landfilled, in the metropolitan area. The intent of this section of the Advocacy Position is to highlight that the Levy should not be applied to premises, where the primary purpose is resource recovery.

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended.

SOUTH EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE

Add a new Part 6:

Actively support collaboration with processors and prioritise the establishment of FOGO markets and address the perceived and actual barriers. Consider priority market (Local Government) purchasing protocols to inform the facilitation of FOGO products market development.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Add new Part 6 - At the March State Council meeting the Advocacy Position on a Recovered Material Framework was endorsed, this includes specific points which address this issue for all materials, including Food Organic Garden Organic (FOGO).

Recovered Materials Framework

The use of recovered materials, across a range of applications, is essential in reducing the use of basic raw materials, meeting State Waste Strategy Targets and increasing diversion of waste from landfill. To ensure end users have high confidence in the quality and safety of products derived from recovered materials, consistent, outcomes-based standards and investment certainty are required.

3. *Supporting the development of, and access to, sustainable end markets and long-term offtake agreements through initiatives such as active engagement with potential end users and the inclusion of recovered material content targets in Government procurement and large infrastructure projects.*

To identify the importance of organic, and other priority wastes, an additional point has been added into the Advocacy Position.

Regarding the role of procurement to facilitate market development this important issue will be included in the Circular Economy Advocacy Position which is currently being developed.

No change to Advocacy Position Recommended.

SOUTH WEST COUNTRY ZONE

Add a new Part 2(2)(e) as follows:

Monitoring and regulation of activities at regional facilities with staffing based within regional locations in order to ensure a more proactive and responsive compliance regime.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

Compliance is an important issue. The Policy Statement includes reference to the importance of compliance. It is recommended that the portion of the Policy Statement relating to compliance be replicated in the Advocacy Position.

COMPOSITE RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio
Seconded: Mayor Logan Howlett JP

1. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy (the Levy) was established in WA to fund programs relating to the management, reduction, reuse, recycling, monitoring or measurement of waste and administering the fund. The current Levy is applied to waste generated, or landfilled, in the Perth metropolitan area.

Currently, only 25% of the collected funds are retained for strategic waste management activities, 75% are allocated to the ongoing operations of the Department responsible for administration of the Levy.

2. Local Government considers that:
 1. The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy (the Levy) funds must be fully hypothecated to strategic waste management activities in line with the State Waste Strategy including focus on priority materials such as organic waste.
 2. The Levy funds must not be used for non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities.
 3. Strategic waste management activities funded by the State Government should:
 - a. Provide adequate funding and support for Regional Councils, non-metropolitan and metropolitan Local Governments;
 - b. Reflect the targets and priorities within the Waste Strategy;
 - c. Fully fund and acknowledge the life cycle costs of infrastructure and services; and
 - d. Facilitate the development, implementation and ongoing operation of Product Stewardship Schemes.
 4. The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area as it is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change.
 5. The Levy should not be applied to waste received at premises undertaking licensed activities whose primary purpose is resource recovery.
 6. The Levy must be supported by a clear, evidence-based rationale to demonstrate the suitability of how charges are set, how and where funds are allocated, and the extent to which it is delivering on its objectives.
 7. The Levy must be supported by a comprehensive regulatory regime for activities that are, or should be, licenced.

RESOLUTION 025.2/2024

CARRIED



Waste Levy Policy Statement

March 2024

Policy Statement

A Policy Statement to outline the WALGA position on Levies charged on the weight or volume of waste received at sites undertaking licensed activities and the application of those funds to waste management activities.

Background

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy (the Levy) was first established in WA in 1998, through the *Environmental Protection (Landfill) Levy Act 1998* (EP Levy Act) where money raised through the Levy was only used to fund programs relating to the management, reduction, reuse, recycling, monitoring or measurement of waste and administering the fund. The current Levy is applied to putrescible waste and inert waste generated in, or disposed of, in the metropolitan area.

The Levy was originally intended to fund strategic waste management activities. In 2009, the EP Levy Act was amended to allow the Levy funds to be used to support the core activities of the State Government Department responsible for Levy administration. This means only 25% of the collected funds are retained for strategic waste management activities, with a significant proportion of these funds used to fund ongoing operations of the Department relating to waste management, such as salaries and overheads.

This Policy Statement provides comment on the existing Waste Levy as an existing mechanism.

Statement of Policy

1. Support for Waste Levy

a) The Waste Levy should be fully hypothecated to Strategic Waste Management Activities.

Local Government strongly opposes the application of the Levy to non-waste management related activities, such as funding State Government core activities and ongoing operations.

b) The Levy should not be applied to waste generated in the non-metropolitan area.

It is not feasible, or appropriate, to implement the Levy in non-metropolitan areas with a limited rate base, access to markets for recycled materials, economic growth and resources to manage such a change. The Levy's application to these areas would have negative environmental, social and economic outcomes.

c) The Levy should not be applied to waste received at premises undertaking licenced activities whose primary purpose is resource recovery.

Local Government strongly opposes the application of the Levy to waste delivered to sites undertaking licenced activities, where those activities have, as a primary purpose, resource recovery (such as materials recovery facilities (MRFs), green waste processing facilities and waste to energy facilities (WTEs). Local Government will consider the appropriateness of the Levy being applied to waste delivered to other types of licenced activities (for example mine dumps) on a case-by-case basis.

2. Strategic Waste Management Activities

Levy funds should be expended on programs that:

- a) **Support the achievement of targets, and reflects the priorities, within the State Waste Strategy**
- b) **Provide adequate funding and support for Regional Councils, non-metropolitan and metropolitan Local Governments, ensuring the difference in regional priorities are recognised**
- c) **Fully fund the life-cycle costs of infrastructure and services**
- d) **Facilitate the development, implementation and ongoing operation of Product Stewardship Schemes.**

3. Basis for setting Levy

The Waste Levy rate should be determined by reference to following criteria:

a) **Capacity to fund the State Waste Strategy**

It is necessary that the Levy rate(s) is/are supports the implementation of the State Waste Strategy. Local Government recognises that total annual expenditures may sometimes exceed and at other times fall below the total revenues raised by the Levy.

b) **Capacity to achieve any other stated objectives**

Any proposal from the State Government to use the Levy to achieve objectives, other than the generation of funds for strategic activities, must have valid reasons to show how a change in the Levy will support those objectives before Local Government would support the use of Levy funds.

c) **Capacity to pay the Levy**

In setting the Levy rate, the State Government must consider the capacity of Local Governments and their communities to pay the Levy.

a) **Capacity to Plan**

To ensure Local Government can plan and budget for changes to the Levy, and has a firm basis for business cases to change service provision, at least a 5 year rolling schedule for the Levy is required.

4. Regulation of the Levy

The Levy must be supported by a comprehensive regulatory regime for activities that are, or should be, licenced.

Without effective regulation, the Levy's ability to raise funds and act as an economic instrument to reduce waste to landfill is negated.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY STATE COUNCILLORS (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)

7.2 ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the update on proposed amendments to the Association Constitution to:

1. primarily, allow WALGA to be in a position to apply to be registered as an organisation of employers under the *Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA)*; and
2. make some changes to address inconsistencies and modernise terminology.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Proposed amendments to the Association Constitution will be put to the July State Council meeting and Members at the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) in October.
- These proposed amendments would serve two distinct purposes:
 - Primarily, to enable WALGA to be in a position to apply to the WA Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC) to be registered as an organisation of employers under the [Industrial Relations Act 1979 \(WA\) \(IR Act\)](#) to better represent the Local Government sector in the State industrial relations system; and
 - To address inconsistencies, modernise terminology and generally tidy up the Constitution.
- An item for decision, including a full mark-up of the proposed amendments, will be included in the July State Council Agenda after undergoing a legal review.
- If a Special Majority of State Council endorse the amendments at the July meeting, the proposed amendments will be put to Members at the 2024 AGM.

ATTACHMENT

- [Association Constitution](#)

BACKGROUND

Recently, several factors have converged to necessitate amendments to the Association Constitution.

Importance of WALGA applying to become a registered organisation of employers

Currently, WALGA is a registered industrial agent under the IR Act which allows WALGA to:

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

Since the mandate for Local Governments to operate in the State industrial relations system from 1 January 2023, unions have commenced various awards variation claims in the WAIRC to vary industry standards/conditions.

In addition, unions can now require Local Government employers to make industrial agreements in circumstances where employees have no formal role in the bargaining process and WALGA was not provided with the same standing as the unions to represent the sector in its own right as part of the mandate to the State system.

Despite WALGA's advocacy since December 2022, the State Government has also not agreed a pathway for WALGA to be provided with the same standing as the unions under the IR Act.

For WALGA to better represent Local Governments' views it has become vital for WALGA to seek to amend its Constitution to be in a position to apply to register as an organisation of employers under the IR Act.

The status of an organisation of employers will provide more opportunity for WALGA to modernise the Local Government State Awards and intervene in industrial matters concerning the Local Government sector. In addition, the WAIRC has notification obligations to parties that are organisations which will reduce the risk of unions being able to change the terms and conditions of the sector, with limited to no input from Local Governments or WALGA.

Outcomes from the 2022-2023 Best Practice Governance Review

The Best Practice Governance Review (BPGR), commissioned by State Council in March 2022 and guided by a Steering Committee of State Council and Local Government sector representatives, culminated in two sets of Constitutional amendments being put to Members at the 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM). Both sets of amendments failed to reach the requisite 75% Special Majority support from Members.

Whilst it is not proposed to reconsider the governance and structural changes developed as part of the BPGR, some of the amendments proposed within the BPGR (particularly those contained in the second set of proposed amendments, which retained the current governance structure) may be useful to revisit and consider adopting. Particularly, those amendments that are intended to address inconsistencies that have emerged after several rounds of amendments since the Constitution was first adopted by WALGA in 2001.

With this in mind, a fresh review has been undertaken to develop proposed amendments to the Constitution. The key objective of this portion of the review is to make the Constitution consistent, accurate and modern.

An outline of the proposed amendments are provided below.

COMMENT

The proposed amendments to the Constitution can be separated into two distinct categories:

1. Those amendments that are necessary for WALGA to be in a position to apply to the WAIRC to register as an organisation of employers); and
2. Amendments to address inconsistencies that have emerged after several rounds of amendments since the Constitution was first adopted by WALGA in 2001, as well as to modernise wording generally.

The first category of proposed changes will necessarily result in material changes to the structure and processes described in the Constitution, whilst the second category of proposed changes will not.

Application to be registered as an organisation of employers

In order for WALGA to be in a position to apply to be registered as an organisation under the IR Act, WALGA must be able to demonstrate we comply with the requirements of [s.54](#) and [Part II Division 4](#) of the IR Act. In practice, this means that WALGA will need to amend the Constitutional including:

1. office bearer positions – there is a currently a statutory requirement to have a secretary and a finance officer (see s. ss 31(2), 60(3), 63(2), 165, 69(9) and 74 of the IR Act);
2. election procedures (see ss. 56, 57, 69 IR Act);
3. membership register (see s. 64D); and
4. auditing and reporting (ss. 63, 65 and 69).

Other proposed amendments

The additional Constitutional amendments proposed (separate to those described above, and not required for WALGA to apply for registrations as an organisation of employers) are summarised as follows:

- General tidy up of the definitions section in clause 2 (without changing the substantive meaning);
- Create consistency in terminology (e.g. “subclause” rather than “sub clause”, “Local Government” rather than “Council”);
- Capitalisation and consistent use of defined terms throughout;
- Deletion of subclause 9(2) which gives Members the power to determine the allocation of representational positions on State Council, in light of clause 12(2)(b) which gives this power to State Council;
- Amendment to subclause 14(3) to transfer the power to determine the number of Zones from Members to State Council.
- Amendment to clause 20 so it does not apply to Ex-officio members of State Council.

At this stage, it is not proposed to contemplate a new clause in the Constitution about disqualification of the President, Deputy President, or State Council representatives if they nominate for State or Federal Parliament. A provision to this effect was discussed and suggested by State Council in September 2021, and included in the suggested amendments put to Members at the 2023 AGM.

However, State Council could consider a new clause either in the Constitution or in the Corporate Governance Charter that aligns with the position in WALGA's guidance document for Council Members considering participation in State or Federal politics. That is, a clause requiring the President, Deputy President and State Councillors to take a leave of absence when the writs are issued if they are running for State or Federal parliament.

Next Steps

Amending the Constitution is an involved process, requiring endorsement by both State Council and the membership at a General Meeting. The process for amending WALGA's Constitution is outlined in Clause 29 of the [Constitution](#).

The Constitution of the Association may be altered, added to or repealed by:

1. *A resolution at any meeting of the State Council on the receipt of a special majority of not less than 75% of representatives or by their deputy representatives; and*
2. *A resolution at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting passed by a majority of not less than 75% of delegates or duly authorise a proxy vote to be exercised on their behalf, provided that:*

- a. 75% of Ordinary Members who are eligible to vote are present or represented; and
- b. the Chief Executive Officer has given not less than sixty (60) days notice of any proposal to alter, add or repeal the Constitution to all Ordinary Members.

An item for decision detailing the proposed amendments and including a mark-up of the Constitution will be included in the next State Council Agenda. This item will be considered by Zones during their June round of meetings, and then considered by State Council at the July meeting. If a Special Majority of State Council endorses the proposed constitutional amendments at the July meeting, the amendments will be put to Members at the 2024 AGM.

Section 55 of the IR Act prescribes an additional step to the process. In considering an application to become an organisation of employers, the Commission must refuse an application unless it is satisfied that “the application has been authorised in accordance with the rules of the organisation” (i.e. WALGA’s current Constitution and procedures). To satisfy this requirement, authorisation will be required from both State Council and Members. The question of whether WALGA should make an application to the Commission will be considered as a separate item for decision at the July State Council meeting and October AGM. If this item does not receive requisite support, the item proposing Constitutional amendments related to WALGA’s application to the Commission will not be put to Members.

Given that the amendments related to WALGA’s application to be registered as an organisation of employers are necessary changes, these will be treated separately to all other amendments. That is, Members will be required to consider and vote on these amendments separately from the other proposed amendments at the AGM in October.

The mark-up version of the Constitution including all proposed amendments will undergo a full legal review prior to consideration by State Council.

If State Council would like other amendments considered, then the items should be listed for inclusion at this meeting (1 May 2024), so that the amendments can undergo a legal review and be prepared for the June/July round of meetings.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Phil Blight
Seconded: Cr Karen Wheatland

That State Council note the update on proposed amendments to the Association Constitution to:

1. primarily, allow WALGA to be in a position to apply to be registered as an organisation of employers under the *Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA)*; and
2. make some changes to address inconsistencies and modernise terminology.

RESOLUTION 026.2/20214

CARRIED

7.3 SUBMISSION ON THE INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABILITY

By Daniel Thomson, Manager Economics

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That the submission on the inquiry into Local Government Sustainability to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport be endorsed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport (The Committee) will inquiry into and report on Local Government Sustainability and submissions on the inquiry are due by 31 May 2024.
- WALGA's submission addresses current and future Local Government funding and expenditure challenges, as well as current labour market shortages with a focus on regional issues.
- The submission was informed by WALGA's advocacy positions, 2024-25 State and Federal Budget submissions and relevant data, and statistics from a range of sources.
- The endorsed submission will be circulated to the sector and Local Governments are encouraged to prepare their own submission on the inquiry.

ATTACHMENT

- WALGA's submission on the inquiry into Local Government Sustainability

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

BACKGROUND

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

The Terms of Reference identified the following areas of focus:

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

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

The Committee is seeking written submissions by **31 May 2024**.

The submissions will also inform the Committee's further engagement, including locations the Committee will visit as part of the inquiry. It is expected that the Inquiry will take 12 months, extending beyond the next Federal election.

COMMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Given the limited timeframe to provide comments direct engagement with Local Government was not feasible. Instead, the draft submission will be circulated to the sector and Local Governments are encouraged to provide their own submission on the inquiry.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Kirrilee Warr
Seconded: President Chris Antonio

That the submission on the inquiry into Local Government Sustainability to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport be endorsed.

AMENDMENT

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly
Seconded: President Cr Phil Blight

- 1. Insert a new Part 2 as follows:
"A working party of State Councillors to be established by the President to work with the WALGA Economist to refine the submission and submit to State Council as a Flying Minute, for approval by the submission deadline."**
- 2. Include the words "in principle" at the end of Part 1.**

THE AMENDMENT WAS PUT AND CARRIED

RESOLUTION 027.2/2024

CARRIED

THE SUBSTANTIVE MOTION AS AMENDED WAS PUT

That:

- 1. the submission on the inquiry into Local Government Sustainability to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport be endorsed in principle.**
- 2. a working party of State Councillors to be established by the President to work with the WALGA Economist to refine the submission and submit to State Council as a Flying Minute, for approval by the submission deadline.**

RESOLUTION 028.2/2024

CARRIED

Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability

WALGA Submission

April 2024

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About WALGA

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

Our membership includes all 139 Local Governments in the State. WALGA uses its influence, support and expertise to deliver better outcomes for WA Local Governments and their communities.

We do this through effective advocacy to all levels of Government on behalf of our Members, and by the provision of expert advice, services and support to Local Governments.

WALGA's vision is for agile and inclusive Local Governments, enhancing community wellbeing and enabling economic prosperity.

About Local Government in WA

Local Government undertakes functions most appropriately implemented at the local level in the best interests of local communities.

The Local Government sector in WA is diverse. There are 139 Local Governments across metropolitan and regional WA, varying in geographical size and population base. As a result, there is a significant diversity in the range of functions and services that are provided by Local Government, depending on the size and location of the Local Government.

WA Local Government Snapshot

- 139 Local Governments: 30 metropolitan; 109 non-metropolitan
- Populations range from <100 to >230,000
- Geographic areas range from 1.1 sq kms to 372,000 sq kms
- Number of employees range from 10 to 1000+
- Total revenue: \$5.2 billion
- Total Assets: \$49.4 billion

2021-22 data. Source: WALGA Local Government Directory; ABS Government Finance Statistics

1. Introduction

WALGA welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability on behalf of the Western Australian Local Government sector.

The sector values the relationship between the Commonwealth and Local Governments and welcomes its role as a trusted delivery partner of projects that benefit the community.

This Submission will address the funding challenges encountered by Local Governments in WA, pressures on local government expenditure and labour challenges and skills shortages experienced by the sector.

2. Funding Challenges

Local Government revenue comes from three main sources:

- taxes in the form of rates
- charges for sale of goods and services, and
- grants from Federal and State Governments.

At a whole of sector level, the majority of Local Government revenue comes from rates. However, structural differences between Local Governments mean that some (particularly smaller, regional Local Governments) have a lower capacity to raise rates revenue and are more reliant on grants from other levels of government. Rate revenue ranges from 2% in a remote Local Government to 87% of revenue in an inner urban Local Government. These constraints mean that Local Governments are reliant on funding from other levels of Government to deliver on their responsibilities.

While constraints on revenue place pressure on Local Governments' finances, in recent times this has been exacerbated by rapid increases in costs primarily because of skyrocketing construction costs in response to global supply chain pressures and the COVID-19-induced stimulus. As these factors start to unwind, growth in Local Government costs will begin a path back towards the long-term average levels. However, the real costs faced by Local Governments will stabilise at a new high and are not expected to return to their pre-pandemic levels.

New pressures are emerging in the near term, in the form of rapidly rising wages and employee costs. This will be an important issue for Local Governments in the coming year, given that employee costs represent around a third of the sector's cost base.

Rate Exemptions

Exemptions from rates represent significant revenue leakage for Local Government. This shortfall in revenue must then be made up by other ratepayers or by reducing services.

Rate exemptions for charitable purposes are of particular concern. This exemption has extended in scope well beyond its original intent to provide rate exemptions for the commercial undertakings of not-for-profit organisations. For instance, Independent Living Units, which often cost far more than the median house, are often exempt from rates. The net result of this is that millions of dollars in revenue is lost to Local Government which then must be recouped from other ratepayers, many of whom would not be in a position to afford an Independent Living Unit themselves.

Additional rate exemptions that are of concern for the sector relate to the following:

- Department of Housing: Leasing to Charitable Organisations

-
- Government Trading Entities
 - State Agreement Act projects
 - State Owned Unallocated Crown Land

WALGA considers that an independent review of all rate exemptions be conducted to ensure that equity and fairness among ratepayers in the community.

Fees and Charges

Fees and charges represent a significant source of discretionary revenue for Local Governments. Examples include dog registration fees, fees for building approvals and swimming pool entrance fees.

Currently, fees and charges are determined by legislation or regulation, with an upper limit set by legislation, or by the Local Government. Fees mandated by legislation often do not keep pace with the cost of delivery, resulting in ratepayers subsidising particular activities without any ability to have input into the setting of the fee.

While cost recovery should be a consideration for the setting of fees and charges, there are some services that Local Governments may choose to subsidise to encourage activities with overall community benefit.

Setting appropriate fees and charges is a core Local Government function and should be a deliberative decision of the Council.

WALGA's advocacy position is that an independent review be undertaken to remove fees and charges from legislation and regulation and that Local Government be empowered to set fees and charges for Local Government services. Alternatively, fees and charges set by State Government regulations, specifically planning fees, should achieve cost recovery and be reviewed regularly with Local Government input.

Financial Assistance Grants

Financial Assistance Grants make a significant contribution to Local Governments' financial sustainability. Financial Assistance Grants are particularly important to rural and remote Local Governments, which often have a low rate base and capacity to raise other revenue.

Untied funding, such as Financial Assistance Grants, allows Local Governments to allocate expenditure according to the conditions and the preferences of their community. Furthermore, untied funding arrangements have lower administrative costs for both Local Government and the Commonwealth Government.

WALGA's advocacy position is that Financial Assistance Grants should remain as an untied transfer to Local Governments and the current minimum grant structure should be retained.

Financial Assistance Grants as a proportion of Commonwealth taxation have been steadily decreasing over time. An increase to the funding pool and a more appropriate indexation methodology would help stop this trend.

The National Principle relating to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders should be reviewed since improved service provision to such communities would be more appropriately addressed through tied funding grants, rather than untied Financial Assistance Grants funding.

WALGA's advocacy position is that the following aspects of the Financial Assistance Grants Program should be reviewed:

- the quantum of the funding pool;
- the indexation methodology; and
- the 'National Principle' relating to 'Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders'.

3. Local Government Expenditure

Local Governments provide a range of valuable services and infrastructure that affect the daily lives of all people and businesses, including roads, waste collection, libraries and cultural facilities, building services and development approvals. It is also responsible for important regulations to protect the community, including public health, noise control and animal management.

Over time, the services provided by Local Governments have expanded to fill gaps in service delivery from other levels of Government or the private sector and to align with changes in social structures and community expectations.

Some examples of where WA Local Governments are stepping in to fill service gaps include primary health care, telecommunications and emergency management.

Primary Health Care

Primary health care services allow communities to access health services outside a hospital or specialist which is critical to improving community health outcomes and reduces pressure on emergency services. The WALGA 2023 Primary Healthcare Services Survey revealed that 66 per cent of WA Local Government respondents reported providing financial or in-kind support towards the provision of healthcare services in 2021-22 at a cost of \$7.13 million. The findings of the Survey highlight the magnitude of the additional cost to Local Government to ensure ongoing health services for their communities. The need to intervene in failing markets is not evenly distributed across the sector. Regional Local Governments with populations under 5,000 are significantly more likely to finance healthcare services, despite lower revenue thresholds.

Local Governments are reporting that they are meeting the costs of GP wages, housing, vehicles and medical centre operations to retain essential healthcare services. The increasing financial support from Local Government illustrates that the current healthcare service is not commercially viable in smaller and regional locations, in part due to the current operation of the Medicare rebate system. WA Local Governments are also increasingly entering into commercial agreements to secure services which is outside their legislative responsibility and expertise.

Telecommunications

All Australians should be able to access modern telecommunications services regardless of where they live or do business. However, it is not commercially attractive for telecommunications companies to provide equity in access to mobile and broadband services in all areas. WALGA has advocated at State and National levels for improvements to the coverage, resilience, and capacity of mobile telecommunications to ensure adequate coverage specifically in regional areas.

The Australian Government seeks to improve the level of telecommunications services available in remote, rural and peri-urban areas through a range of competitive grant programs including the Mobile Black Spot Program and Peri-urban Mobile Program. However, these programs seek, and reward funding contributions from other parties, specifically including Local Governments.

To achieve more equitable access, Local Governments are drawn to contribute financially to telecommunications services, which are a Federal Government responsibility, and delivered through commercial operations in other parts of Australia.

To enable their operations, rural Local Governments in parts of Western Australia have also needed to invest in wireless broadband capacity, because NBN services with sufficient capacity were not available.

Emergency Management

The State Government bears fundamental responsibility for emergency management and has the role of providing strategic guidance, support and services for emergency management activities in Western Australia (WA). Local Governments in WA have significant roles delegated to them in emergency management, including supporting their communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Local Governments face many challenges in addressing their emergency management responsibilities, and these challenges differ greatly across the State. The frequency and extremity of heatwaves, bushfires and extreme weather events are increasing, and some WA communities will be exposed to emergencies they have not historically experienced. Supporting Local Government capacity to manage the implications of climate risk is key to WA's future resilience.

Recommendation 11.1 of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was that *State and territory governments should take responsibility for the capability and capacity of local governments to which they have delegated their responsibilities in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters, to ensure local governments are able to effectively discharge the responsibilities devolved to them.*

A sustainable funding approach to Local Government Emergency Management is required, that:

- Empowers Local Governments to undertake proactive approaches to preparedness, prevention, response and recovery;

-
- Supports the resilience of local communities through capacity-building activities and programs;
 - Is responsive to the variations in Local Government resourcing and context;
 - Develop the skills, capacity and capability of the emergency management workforce;
 - Is consistent, flexible, timely, accessible, scalable, strategic and the guidance provided is comprehensive.

Infrastructure Provision

All levels of Government have an important role in the provision of infrastructure. For Local Government, this is largely centred on the provision of roads and community infrastructure.

Local Governments are responsible for the maintenance and improvement of 127,000km of roads amounting to 87 per cent of the public road network and provide important community infrastructure such as sport and recreation facilities, libraries, community centres, airports, boat harbours, camping grounds and parking facilities.

Local Governments have significant responsibilities for the provision of local infrastructure but are constrained in their ability to fund future obligations for infrastructure renewal and replacement due to revenue constraints as identified earlier in the submission.

Road crashes in Western Australia cost the economy an estimated \$2.4 billion per year¹. Over half of all road crashes in Western Australia that result in death or serious injuries occur on roads that are the responsibility of Local Governments. While the safety of roads and roadsides is critical to establishing a safe system, the current financial capacity of Local Governments collectively is inadequate to even maintain the network in its existing condition. Significant investment is required to achieve a safe network, consistent with the National Road Safety Strategy. A recent analysis completed by the National Transport Research Organisation identifies relatively low-cost, proven treatments including sealing shoulders and installing audible centre and edge lines that are projected to reduce fatalities from run-off road crashes by 50% and serious injuries by 35%. To achieve this would require a capital investment program in addition to significant increases in the untied road component of Financial Assistance Grants.

Skilled labour shortages and supply chain restrictions since 2021 have significantly increased costs and extended delivery times for typical renewal and improvement projects undertaken by Local Governments. For example, road and bridge construction costs are estimated to have increased 20.8% in the three years to December 2023, while non-residential building construction costs increased 33.7% over the same period².

Local Governments are the most asset-intensive sphere of Government and collect a very small proportion of total taxation revenue. Nationally, the Australian Local Government

¹ Source Road Safety Commission (2018 – 2022)

² [Australian Bureau of Statistics 2 February 2024 Producer Price Indexes](#). Accessed 19 April 2024

Association (ALGA) reports that 20% to 25% of Local Government assets are in fair condition and 10% are poor to very poor in condition, function or capacity³. At June 2022, buildings and structures held by WA Local Governments had a balance sheet value of \$38.4 billion. For most Local Governments, the asset-class roads dominate their register. In 2021-22 there was a \$282 million shortfall between actual expenditure on road renewal and maintenance and that estimated to be required to maintain the network in the same condition as the beginning of the year. Funding to improve the network, accommodate larger trucks and increased traffic, and improvements in the level of safety provided is in addition to overcoming this gap.

Future Demands for Services and Infrastructure

Looking forward there are a range of forces that are shaping the broader economic and social environment. These will have implications for Local Governments and the community's expectations for the delivery of services and infrastructure. Examples include:

- *Transition to a low-carbon future* – The shift towards a low-carbon economy is underway as we work towards the Australian Government's target of net zero emissions by 2050. Uptake of renewable energy, investment in new technologies and the adoption of sustainable practices and infrastructure will all shape the way that Local Governments and their communities operate.
- *Climate change* – The impacts of climate change are already being felt and pose significant risks to our communities. With hotter days and more frequent extreme weather events, there will need to be a greater focus on enhancing community resilience, safeguarding infrastructure and preparing and responding to natural disasters.
- *Demographic shifts* - With population growth exceeding recent forecasts and a growing number of older Western Australians, we need to ensure services and infrastructure are meeting the community's needs. These demographic shifts will see a greater demand for services such as health and aged care, housing and accessible community infrastructure.

Local Governments will require adequate resources into the future to deliver on these changing community needs and expectations.

4. Workforce challenges

Workforce challenges are a significant issue for the sector, particularly given Western Australia's extremely tight labour market conditions.

Workforce profile of the WA Local Government sector:

³ Australian Local Government Association [2021 National State of the Assets Report](#). Accessed 19 April 2021

- In 2021, the size of the sector's workforce was 22,600 FTE employees, a 5.6% increase from the 21,400 FTEs in June 2020.⁴
- Local Governments were spatially distributed across Rural (71%), Urban and Urban Fringe (23%) and Urban Regional (6%) areas.
- Employment size: Employment size among local governments ranged from 10 to over 1000.
- Gender equity: The workforce was 54.3% male and 45.7% female. There were a higher proportion of males working full-time and a higher proportion of females in part-time and casual roles.
- Length of service: 39.2% of the combined workforce of the 42 respondents were employed by their local government for more than 10 years, 19.6% for 6-10 years and 18.6% for less than a year. 5.6% of the workforce among respondent WA local governments had 20 years or more of service.
- Age profile: The highest proportion of the Local Government workforce was aged 30-44, followed by the 45-54 and 55-64-year age groups. Rural Local Governments had the highest proportion of workers aged 15-19 years.
- Among responding WA Local Governments, the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants were in the 15-19-year age group and were in Operational and Trade positions (16.3% identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander).
- Median annual employee turnover in June 2023 was 25.1%, compared to 27.6% in June 2022. Over the past six surveys, the median turnover rate has steadily increased, with a COVID-19-related spike in the year ending June 2022.
- Regional Local Governments were most affected by difficulties attracting and retaining workers. Staffing challenges are characterised by a high rate of turnover of Chief Executive Officers, (especially in non-metropolitan Local Governments); difficulty attracting and retaining staff, and lack of capability and capacity to deliver all functions and services in small, remote and rural areas.

The Australian Local Government Association, with funding from the Commonwealth Government, commissioned SGS Economics and Planning to undertake the 2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey to gather contemporary insights into the national workforce profile of Australia's Local Government sector and to determine current and future workforce needs and priorities.

The Survey results provide a rich insight into the Australian Local Government workforce, its skilling needs, and priorities at a time when Australian communities are undergoing rapid change.

The survey also confirms longstanding constraints that are impeding workforce development. At a time when the social and economic environment is rapidly changing, now is a critical juncture for the sector to renew – and potentially reset – how it addresses key skills shortages and builds capacity for greater resilience in the longer term.

⁴ ABS (2021), *Employment and Earnings, Public Sector Australia*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/employment-and-earnings-public-sector-australia/2018-19>

The key findings of this Survey show that:

- Local Government is a major national employer with over 190,800 workers in almost 400 occupations. It plays an important role as an anchor organisation and in increasing productivity through utilising endogenous talent and innovation.
- Local Governments continue to experience skills shortages in multiple occupations, exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of climate change and the accelerated take-up of technology and digitisation of services.
- Local Governments are grappling with significant challenges in relation to recruitment and retention of skilled staff and accessing training opportunities to enhance workforce skills and capability. Employee attrition and an ageing workforce are ongoing.
- Local Governments are having difficulties in securing the right quantum and mix of skills to support local service provision which is affecting not only Local Government's productivity, but also the productivity of host localities and regions.
- Barriers to effective workforce planning and management include a shortage of resources within Local Government, a lack of skilled workers and the loss of corporate knowledge as employees retire or resign.

The key findings specific to the WA Local Government sector identified in the 2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey include:

- 90% of respondent Local Governments reported that they were experiencing skills shortages in 2021-22, compared to the 47% of local governments in 2018.
- 59% of respondent Local Governments said that project delivery has been impacted or delayed by vacancies, skills shortages, skills gaps or training needs.
- Building surveyors, risk managers, engineers and town planners were the top professional occupations experiencing skill shortages in 2020-21, affecting 21-24% of councils. Among trade occupations, customer service workers, labourers and truck drivers experienced the greatest shortages (affecting 29-33% of local governments).
- The top occupational skill shortage areas differed by remoteness. For example, more rural Local Governments were impacted by shortages of human resource professionals compared to Urban and Urban Fringe local governments.
- As a result of these skills shortages, Local Governments said that they resorted to recruiting less skilled applicants for governance and risk managers, community development and engagement officers, customer service workers and truck drivers.
- Occupational skill shortages that respondent Local Governments reported as becoming critical include customer service workers, accounts and payroll clerks, truck drivers, environmental health officers and engineers.
- Common drivers of skill shortages reported by the 42 Local Governments include a market shortage of suitably skilled candidates, an inability to compete with the private sector and other Local Governments on remuneration, and regional location. Regional location was also related to perceptions of liveability and the availability of community infrastructure for relocating households.
- Key drivers of skills gaps include limited availability of candidates with relevant experience, better remuneration in other sectors, an ageing workforce and challenges to incentivising regional relocation.
- The most common approach among the 42 Local Governments to addressing skills gaps and shortages was to provide informal, on-job training (23 councils, 55%),

followed by coaching and mentoring (20 councils, 48%) and offering targeted training courses (18 councils, 43%).

- 24 Local Governments (57%) also said they shared services or resources with other councils. These arrangements are often related to environment health officers, building trades, planners, ranger services and IT services. Some Local Governments also shared community development, animal care and work, health and safety resources.
- 30 Local Governments (71%) said that advertising and the use of social media platforms had led to successful recruitment, followed by 24 Local Governments (57%) who relied on reskilling and upskilling employees in response to skill shortages. 16 Local Governments (38%) said they relied on external recruitment agencies to fill vacancies.
- Over the last 3 years, 27 Local Governments (64%) engaged with state or federal education, training, or other initiatives to support workforce retention and attraction.

Like other sectors of the WA economy, skills shortages are a key issue facing Local Governments. Overcoming these shortages will be essential to ensure that Local Governments can efficiently service their communities.

Support for training of town planners, building surveyors and Environmental Health Officers

Local Governments are experiencing key skills shortages which are impacting their capacity to efficiently undertake important planning and regulatory functions to protect the wellbeing of the WA community.

In particular, Town Planners, Building Surveyors and Environmental Health Officers (EHO) were identified in the 2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey to be critical Local Government Occupations and among the hardest in WA to fill. The Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development's State Priority Occupation List identifies both Town Planners and Building Surveyors as State Priority 1, noting that there is a high level of demand, ongoing difficulty in filling positions and challenges in attracting people to the profession. EHO's are also identified on the State Priority Occupation List as a State Priority 2.

Funding for a dedicated Local Government training program for Town Planning, Building Surveyor and EHOs is necessary to support education, training and professional development for these key areas of skills shortage in WA.

Migration

Given that many regional areas do not have a sufficient local workforce to meet demand, an important opportunity to meet local labour needs is to attract skilled migrants to reside in the area.

WALGA considers that migration policies should allow for locally-led strategies that are flexible, fit for place, and capable of meeting local labour needs.

There has been a range of efforts made over the years to address and review the migration system and its support for regional areas.

One approach that has allowed for locally-led strategies are Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMA). These have been an important way to bring migrants to regional areas that need them the most. There are currently four active DAMAs in place in WA, including:

- *East Kimberley* – Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley
- *Goldfields* – City of Kalgoorlie, Shires of Coolgardie, Dundas, Esperance, Leonora, Menzies and Ravensthorpe
- *Pilbara* – City of Karratha and Town of Port Hedland
- *South West* – Shire of Dardanup; City of Bunbury; City of Busselton; Shire of Augusta Margaret River; Shire of Boyup Brook; Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes; Shire of Capel; Shire of Collie; Shire of Dardanup; Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup; Shire of Harvey; Shire of Manjimup; Shire of Nannup.

DAMAs are also being negotiated for the Great Southern and Mid-West regions.

New regional visa classes were also introduced in November 2019 in an effort to better meet the migration needs of regional areas and address challenges with the old system, and included:

- Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 494), which is an employer-sponsored visa requiring migrants to live and work in a regional area for three years before being eligible for permanent residence; and
- Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491), which is a state and territory-sponsored visa that requires migrants to live and work in a regional area for three years before being eligible for permanent residence.

However, feedback was provided to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration *Inquiry into Migration in Regional Australia* which highlighted that there were some challenges to the effectiveness of the arrangements due to the definition of “regional”, and pathways to permanent residency.⁵

In recognition of the ongoing challenges of the migration system, in 2023 the Australian Government released a Migration Strategy, that is intended to overhaul the migration system and ensure it is fit for purpose. The Government has committed to an Action Plan, a key element of which is to ensure priority is given to visas for regional areas and to review the system to make sure that migration supports the development of regional Australia.⁶

⁵ [2. Inquiry outcomes – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](https://aph.gov.au)

⁶ [Migration Strategy \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](https://homeaffairs.gov.au)

The Government has committed to publish a discussion paper early in 2024 on regional migration settings. This will be a critical opportunity to address the ongoing challenges to ensure the migration system meets the needs of regional areas.

Zone Tax Offset

Remote area assistance programs can be part of a solution to encourage people to live and work in regional areas.

In 2020, the Productivity Commission undertook a study into Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments. The final report found there are a number of issues with the current remote area assistance programs (Zone Tax Offset) that meant that it is not delivering on its objectives, including that:

- payment rates have not been updated since 1993-94 and as a result, the value of the offset to claimants has fallen significantly in real terms; and
- the zones are outdated.

While the Commission recommended the abolition of the Zone Tax Offset, WALGA considers that it still has merit.

WALGA considers that the arrangements should be reviewed to ensure:

- they provide reasonable acknowledgement of the cost of living in remote Australia;
- the zones are based on a contemporary measure of remoteness; and
- the zones are based on up-to-date census figures.

Consideration should also be given to the interaction between the tax system and the migration system, to enable workers who live regionally to benefit from the same tax benefits.

5. Conclusion

WALGA welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission into this Inquiry on behalf of the Western Australian Local Government sector. WALGA is keen to work with the Commonwealth Government to provide proactive, positive solutions to challenges faced by the Sector around financial sustainability, changing infrastructure and service delivery obligations and the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce in the local government sector.

Local Governments are the tier of government closest to the community and provide critical infrastructure and services that are essential to the wellbeing, productivity and liveability of local communities. Local Government welcomes its role as a trusted delivery partner of the Commonwealth Government.

As highlighted in this Submission, local governments face challenges in raising revenue to provide the level of infrastructure and services expected by local communities. This is particularly challenging as community needs and expectations shift and the scope of local government service provision broadens.

WALGA has encouraged all Local Members to engage with this Inquiry and looks forward to the opportunity to continue to consult with the Committee to address the issues raised in this Inquiry in the interest of our local communities.

For enquiries on this Submission please contact Daniel Thomson, WALGA Manager Economics, on dthomson@walga.asn.au

7.4 SUBMISSIONS TO REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REVIEWS AND INQUIRIES

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager, Infrastructure

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

- 1. Endorse the attached submission to the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review.**
- 2. Endorse the attached submission to the Public Administration Committee Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications in Western Australia.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Submissions to the National 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review and the State Parliament Public Administration Committee Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications in Western Australia have been prepared based on endorsed advocacy positions, items raised at Zone meetings and feedback from Local Governments.

All regional and peri-urban Local Governments were invited to provide information for a WALGA submission and to make submissions directly.

The 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review submission identifies 12 recommendations that respond to the key issues faced by peri-urban, rural and remote Local Governments:

- mobile service coverage;
- choice and therefore cost of mobile service provider;
- speed, capacity and cost of internet services; and
- reliability and resilience of mobile and broadband services.

ATTACHMENT

- Regional Telecommunications 2024 Submission
- Regional Telecommunications State Parliamentary Inquiry

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This submission is consistent with:

- State Council Resolution 294.7/2021 Regional Telecommunications which seeks continuation and expansion of the Mobile Black Spot program to improve telecommunications coverage.
- Recommendation 11 of the Independent Operational Review of the Management of the Wooroloo Fire of February 2021, that DFES and Local Government should continue discussions with telecommunications providers to explore the adequacy of current arrangements for backup power at telecommunication towers in emergency incidents.¹

¹ Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council Limited 2021, [A review of the management of the Wooroloo fire of February 2021](#) Accessed 22 April 2024

- Recommendations from inquiries, reviews and reports concerning the Black Summer bushfires in eastern Australia such as Final Report of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry².

BACKGROUND

The Commonwealth Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999 (Part 9B) establishes the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee and requires an independent review is completed every three years. The 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review has commenced and will examine the adequacy of regional Australia's telecommunications. WALGA provided a submission to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review. While there has been significant investment and some progress, there remains significant inequity in telecommunications service provision across Australia.

The WA Parliament Standing Committee on Public Administration resolved to establish an inquiry into regional telecommunications in Western Australia with broad terms of reference, to consider issues impacting on regional telecommunications.

Given significant overlap in the scope of the reviews occurring at State and Commonwealth level, a single process was used to develop both submissions, adjusted to reflect the different responsibilities of Federal and State Governments in provision of telecommunications services.

COMMENT

Telecommunications services are of critical importance to Local Governments, enabling delivery of emergency management responsibilities, economic development objectives and community aspirations for safe, attractive, liveable places. Local Governments in regional, rural and remote Western Australia report that access to telecommunications services is not equitable across Australia in relation to:

- mobile service coverage;
- choice and therefore cost of mobile service provider;
- speed, capacity and cost of internet services; and
- reliability and resilience of mobile and broadband services.

To reduce the inequity of access to telecommunications services, this submission recommends that the Government:

1. Undertake an effective audit of mobile coverage as soon as possible, identifying the level of service that should be expected at each location.
2. Ensures that the extent of mobile service coverage does not diminish as a result of replacing existing 3G services with 4G and 5G.
3. Continues to co-invest with the telecommunications industry to increase mobile service coverage.
4. Refines Mobile Black Spot Program design to encourage solutions that provide effective coverage without needing multiple SIMS and mobile plans.
5. Requires telecommunications carriers to monitor and report the level of broadband and mobile service and adjust capacity to meet peak demand in areas that have significant changes in population throughout the year.

² [Final Report of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry](#) July 2020

6. Identify mechanisms to encourage or require telecommunications carriers to identify the most vulnerable parts of the network to power failures and establish plans to greatly increase resilience against power failure.
7. Encourage development and deployment of cost-effective standalone power supply systems at telecommunications facilities including mobile base stations.
8. Evaluate the role of accessible satellite services to provide resilience for mobile and broadband services, particularly during emergencies.
9. Initiate the steps to achieve timely mobile roaming during times of emergency and potentially more broadly.
10. Utilise a digital inclusion framework to identify the constraints facing regional Australians' participation in the digital world and develop strategies and programs tailored to regions and communities to overcome these barriers.
11. Redefine the Universal Service Obligations in terms of services provided, cost, reliability and resilience. The technology should not be specified, to enable options including satellite to be considered, provided the levels of service are guaranteed.
12. Universal service obligations should include service standards (reliability, repair time) for mobile and broadband services in regional Australia.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Stephen Strange
Seconded: Cr Karen Wheatland

That State Council:

1. **Endorse the attached submission to the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review.**
2. **Endorse the attached submission to the Public Administration Committee Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications in Western Australia.**

RESOLUTION 029.2/2024

CARRIED

2024 REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

WALGA Submission



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

Our membership includes all 139 Local Governments in the State. WALGA uses its influence, support and expertise to deliver better outcomes for WA Local Governments and their communities.

We do this through effective advocacy to all levels of Government on behalf of our Members and by the provision of expert advice, services and support to Local Governments.

WALGA's vision is for agile and inclusive Local Governments enhancing community wellbeing and enabling economic prosperity.

Contact:

Ian Duncan
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Executive Summary

Telecommunications services are of critical importance to Local Governments, enabling delivery of emergency management responsibilities, economic development objectives and community aspirations for safe, attractive, liveable places. This Review is important because the specific needs of rural, regional and remote communities are often overlooked in upgrades to national telecommunications infrastructure.

Local Governments in regional, rural and remote Western Australia report that access to telecommunications services is not equitable across Australia in relation to:

- mobile service coverage;
- choice and therefore cost of mobile service provider;
- speed, capacity and cost of internet services; and
- reliability and resilience of mobile and broadband services.

To reduce the inequity of access to telecommunications services, this submission recommends that the Australian Government:

1. Undertake an effective audit of mobile coverage as soon as possible, identifying the level of service that should be expected at each location.
2. Ensures that the extent of mobile service coverage does not diminish as a result of replacing existing 3G services with 4G and 5G.
3. Continues to co-invest with the telecommunications industry to increase mobile service coverage.
4. Refines Mobile Black Spot Program design to encourage solutions that provide effective coverage without needing multiple SIMS and mobile plans.
5. Requires telecommunications carriers to monitor and report the level of broadband and mobile service and adjust capacity to meet peak demand in areas that have significant changes in population throughout the year.
6. Identify mechanisms to encourage or require telecommunications carriers to identify the most vulnerable parts of the network to power failures and establish plans to greatly increase resilience against power failure.
7. Encourage development and deployment of cost-effective standalone power supply systems at telecommunications facilities including mobile base stations.
8. Evaluate the role of accessible satellite services to provide resilience for mobile and broadband services, particularly during emergencies.
9. Initiate the steps to achieve timely mobile roaming during times of emergency and potentially more broadly.
10. Utilise a digital inclusion framework to identify the constraints facing regional Australians' participation in the digital world and develop strategies and programs tailored to regions and communities to overcome these barriers.
11. Redefine the Universal Service Obligations in terms of services provided, cost, reliability and resilience. The technology should not be specified, to enable options including satellite to be considered, provided the levels of service are guaranteed.
12. Universal service obligations should include service standards (reliability, repair time) for mobile and broadband services in regional Australia.

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1. Introduction

Western Australian Local Governments have a general power to provide for the good governance of people in their district. In addition to legislative functions, the executive functions of Local Government include provision of services and facilities. A Local Government can provide any service or facility that is necessary for the good governance of the people in its district. However, before providing a service or facility, a Local Government must satisfy itself that the service or facility integrates with State or Commonwealth services, does not inappropriately duplicate any State, Commonwealth or private service, and is managed efficiently and effectively. Consequently, Western Australian Local Governments are generally not providers of utility services including water, power or telecommunications.

However, telecommunications services are of critical importance to Local Governments enabling delivery of their:

- emergency management responsibilities;
- economic development objectives; and
- vision to create safe, attractive, liveable places.

Consequently, Local Governments in rural, regional and remote areas are concerned about the inadequacy of telecommunications services and advocate to Federal and State Governments as well as industry for equitable access to those services needed by residents, businesses and visitors to the area.

Local Governments in regional, rural and remote Western Australia report that their access to telecommunications services is not equitable in relation to:

- mobile service coverage;
- choice and therefore cost of mobile service provider;
- speed, capacity and cost of internet services; and
- reliability and resilience of mobile and broadband services.

Despite significant investment and further planned investment in service offerings and increasing the resilience of telecommunications infrastructure to power failures, these issues are the same as those identified in the submission to the 2021 Hartsuyker Review. However, in the past three years low earth orbit satellite services have become available to retail customers and there has been significant changes to the wireless and satellite broadband service offerings. This review provides an opportunity to better identify the role these newer technologies will play in achieving cost effective, resilient, equitable access to telecommunications services that are significant to those living and working outside Australia's major urban centres. If these technologies are to play a significant role, then measures will be required to ensure that these are accessible throughout the community.

2. Mobile Service Coverage

Rural, regional and remote Local Governments acknowledge and value the significant investment by the Commonwealth Government, in partnership with telecommunications companies and the State Government, through the Mobile Black Spot Program. It is important to highlight that recent investments continue to have a positive impact, including in areas relatively close to Perth and major regional centres. However, significant parts of Western Australia currently have no mobile telephone coverage and can only access the internet and voice communications using satellite based services.

2.1. Accuracy and Relevance of Mobile Coverage Maps

Telecommunications carriers publish coverage maps for 3G, 4G and 5G networks. However, feedback from the community is that these do not provide reliable information at a local scale. The 2022 Federal election commitment to conduct a national audit of mobile coverage is urgently required to better identify mobile coverage Black Spots, providing reliable information to consumers and enabling future investments by governments and industry to be effectively targeted.

For example, Pingelly is shown to have 4G coverage, but the community reports no mobile service in many parts of the town.

It is also important that the level of service that can be expected in a covered area is defined. NBN services typically rely on 4G as a back-up, and consumers switch to mobile services when fixed line services are unavailable. It needs to be clear whether "coverage" includes adequate capacity to utilise data driven services, including websites such as Emergency WA or apps providing news or time critical data (such as Bushfire.io).

2.2. 3G Network Closure

Based on the published mobile network coverage maps as at April 2024, significant lengths of key highways in Western Australia, including the Eyre Highway, Great Northern Highway and North West Coastal Highway, as well as other areas currently have only 3G or no mobile service. Prior to closure of the remaining 3G network, urgent action is required to address deficiencies in emergency communication and network connectivity to ensure the safety and well-being of residents and travellers in these regions.

The transition from 3G to more recent generation standards has not addressed the impacts on some of the most vulnerable community members, including the elderly and those without the means to upgrade to newer phones. Despite publicity, there remains a risk that some will be unable to access emergency services when 3G is no longer available.

2.3. Mobile Black Spot Program

There remains a need for an on-going program such as the Mobile Black Spot Program, to improve mobile telephone coverage in areas where the commercial outcomes will not support this investment. This includes both peri-urban areas, as well as rural, regional and remote.

While those living and traveling through regional, rural and remote Western Australia desire a choice of service providers, the current reality is that Telstra is the only service provider across large parts of Western Australia. The mobile Black Spot Program design responds to applications from carriers. However, there is a risk that the resultant investment does not deliver integrated service coverage across the region. To illustrate, Figure 1 shows telecommunications sites in the south-east of Western Australia. With funding support, a small number of towers have been installed in remote communities that are unlikely to provide service coverage to those travelling through. Similarly, community residents will be unable to access services while enroute to regional centres such as Kalgoorlie unless they have multiple SIM cards. Solutions that provide neutral host base stations that not only can but do support multi-carrier outcomes are likely to provide a more effective level of service.

The Mobile Black Spot Program continues to seek co-funding from Local Governments. This creates clear inequity, through an expectation that remote Local Governments, which demonstrably have the least financial capacity, are expected to co-fund telecommunications infrastructure that would be funded by industry in urban areas.

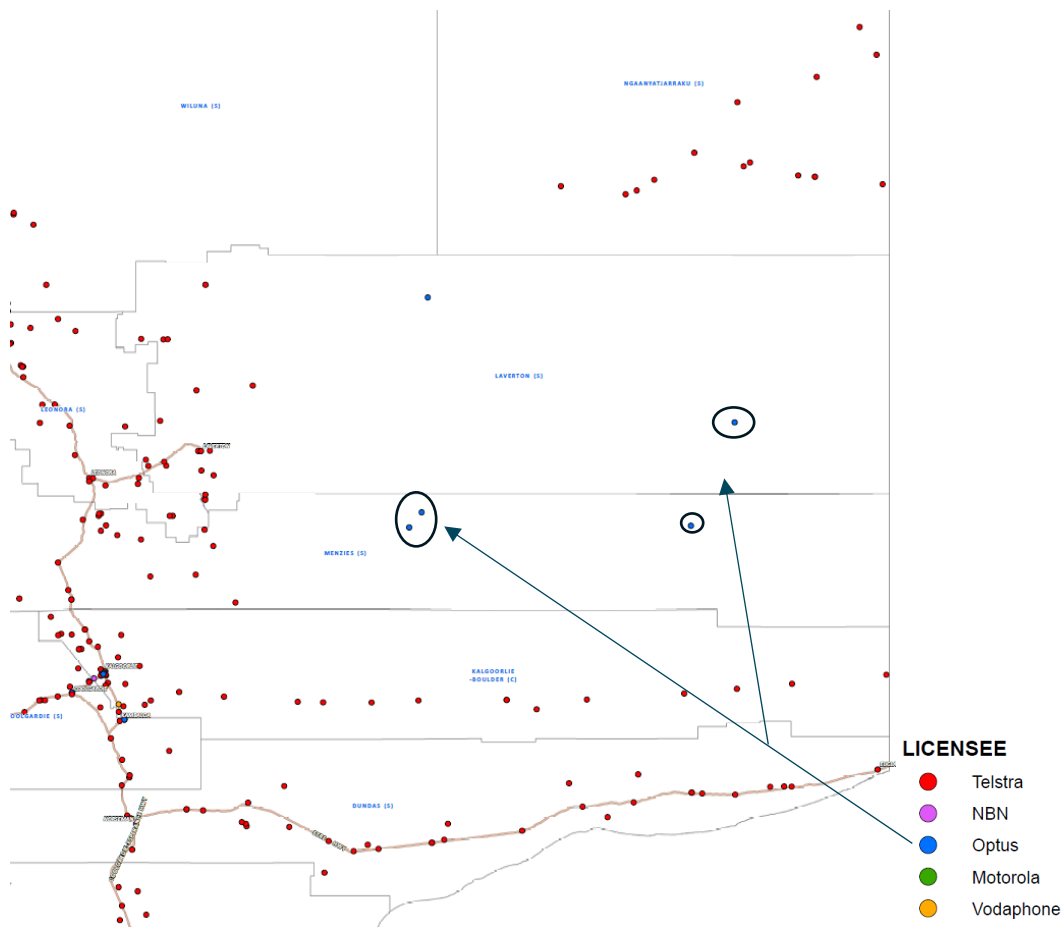


Figure 1: ACMA radio telecommunications sites in south-east Western Australia.

Recommendations

Undertake an effective audit of mobile coverage as soon as possible, identifying the level of service that should be expected at each location.

Ensure that the extent of mobile service coverage does not diminish as a result of replacing existing 3G services with 4G and 5G.

Continue to co-invest with the telecommunications industry to increase mobile service coverage.

Refine Mobile Black Spot Program design to encourage solutions that provide effective coverage without needing multiple SIMS and mobile plans.

3. Speed and Capacity

Access to reliable, high-speed telecommunications is essential for establishing and growing businesses in regional Western Australia. Even businesses in traditional industries rely on online and telecommunication services to quote, invoice, bank, order stock, advertise, undertake training, engage with customers and a host of other activities. The lived experience of many in regional and remote Western Australia is poor performance of their mobile and internet services, particularly in areas that experience large seasonal increases in population. During the peak tourist season visitor population in some popular locations, such as Exmouth, can be three (or more) times the resident population. Towns that are not tourist destinations, but service travellers also report that the telecommunications services do not have sufficient capacity during peak periods, to the extent that even eftpos machines are unable to operate on the mobile network.

Growth in mining activity has resulted in step increases in demand for data capacity on specific parts of the mobile network, resulting in insufficient capacity to meet community needs. Approvals for new mines should require an assessment of telecommunication needs, with a requirement to fund upgrades to existing infrastructure or installing new mobile towers.

Amplifying devices such as YAGI antennae are readily available and used, but in some circumstances negatively impact on the level of service available to others.

There is evidence that the level of connectivity literacy may mean that cost effective options are available, particularly for internet services, that people may not be aware of.

Recommendations

Carriers be required to monitor and report the level of broadband and mobile service and adjust capacity to meet peak demand in areas that have significant changes in population throughout the year.

4. Reliability and Resilience

The Optus outage in November 2023 made national headlines and led to a Senate Committee Inquiry. Unplanned and planned outages in telecommunications services are a daily occurrence in regional Western Australia.

As a result of changing climate, Australia has seen and is expected to continue to suffer more frequent extreme weather events and consequences including floods, bushfires and storms (cyclones). Delivery of timely and effective emergency response is now dependent on telecommunications services working during these critical times. Tuning in to an am radio will not allow people to seek help, nor enable a volunteer SES crew or Bushfire Brigade to be mobilised.

Contemporary telecommunications are dependent on power supply throughout the network, including at the premises, nodes or mobile base stations, exchanges and other facilities. Reliability and resilience of power supplies in rural, regional and remote Western Australia is significantly worse than in urban and CBD areas. Based on data published by Western Power¹, the duration and frequency of power outages in rural areas was four to five times higher than in urban areas during 2022/23, noting that this was the best performance in the more remote rural areas in over a decade as a result of increased powerline maintenance and changes to operating procedures. It should also be highlighted that major (weather) events (two during the year) are excluded from the data. Horizon Power reports², on average slightly lower frequency of power outages than rural areas served by Western Power, with a total duration of outages within the range reported by Western Power for different types of rural customers.

The community, including emergency services, are very heavily dependent on mobile telecommunications. The lack of resilience in the telecommunications network was again recently highlighted in Western Australia in the aftermath of a severe storm that passed through parts of the Perth Hills, and Wheatbelt region on 16 January 2024. Given the extent of damage to the power network it took several days to restore the majority of power services and more than a week to reconnect all customers. Communities highlighted that mobile telephone services and internet access (nbn) failed in many places within hours of the power failures resulting people in a large part of the State being unable to access 000 services, volunteer fire and rescue services unable to communicate with volunteers and people unable to confirm the welfare of family and friends.

The battery back-up provided for telecommunications was demonstrated to be inadequate as was the capacity to quickly deploy and then maintain generators at many sites. Given that the track of the January 2024 storm cell was relatively small, compared with a cyclone for example, this event highlights the vulnerability of communities in rural, and remote areas to prolonged telecommunications outages. Cyclone Seroja, which struck the Mid West region of Western Australia in April 2021 had a significantly greater, and longer lasting impact on the availability of telecommunications. Cyclones are much more frequent in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions which regularly suffer telecommunications outages during these most critical periods.

Service providers including Western Power and nbn Co monitor their networks and provide information to customers about interruptions and anticipated times for repair. However, these initiatives are ineffective once the telecommunications networks fail.

Recognising that most people rely on their mobile phone to access information, the Western Australian Department of Fire and Emergency Services is investing significantly in upgrading

¹ Western Power, [Service Standard Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023](#) Accessed 10 April 2024

² Horizon Power [Network Quality and Reliability of Supply Code 2021/22 Performance Report](#) Accessed 10 April 2024

Emergency WA³, to provide the community with accurate timely information about emergencies in their area. This too will be ineffective, without reliable access to mobile telecommunications.

The joint Federal and State Government National Disaster Risk Reduction grants program supported an important project lead by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services with support from WALGA, telecommunications carriers and power utilities during 2022 and 2023 to create a consolidated dataset of mobile phone towers and their interdependency and link to power supply. The aim is to identify and prioritise investments to improve telecommunications availability and reliability. The technical and commercial sensitivities make implementation of this work difficult. However, we remain of the view that it is important to maximise the benefits from investments in improved resilience.

Given the very large number of telecommunications facilities that require uninterrupted power supply in order to provide a resilient network, a suite of solutions is likely required. These are considered in more detail below.

While telecommunications outages are often the result of power outages, there are concerns with the unreliability of mobile and broadband services in remote Western Australia unrelated to power. The Shire of Sandstone reports a recent six-day mobile telecommunications outage in the town that had a significant impact on businesses, including preventing supply of fuel and other goods and services. Extended loss of communication causes stress to residents, conscious that they are unable to contact medical services or other assistance should an emergency arise.

4.1. On-going Investment in new and renewed batteries

The Mobile Network Hardening Program has funded 12-hour battery back-up at 198 mobile sites in Western Australia and generators or other power system improvements at a further 44 locations. However, there are more than 1200 mobile towers in regional Western Australia, as well as other locations that must be powered for the system to operate. On-going, targeted investment in renewing and expanding the back-up power systems remains critical. It is important to ensure that the appropriate incentives and commercial systems are in place to achieve this.

4.2. Standalone Power Supply

Remotely managed, integrated, standalone power supply systems incorporating batteries, solar panels and if necessary diesel generators offer the potential to radically improve the reliability of power supplies to telecommunications facilities at all times, including during times of emergency. These remain costly, but it would appear that the relative cost is falling and opportunities to exploit economies of scale should be pursued. It is noted that in the north of the state, power supply batteries must be housed in such a way as to prevent deterioration due to extreme heat.

4.3. Satellite Based Services

Funded through the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters Program (STAND), satellite enabled wifi services have been installed in 370 Local Government evacuation

³ [Local Company to deliver next generation Emergency WA](#)

centres and similar facilities across the State. These are designed to offer a communications service during emergencies when people have been evacuated.

Satellite based service offerings are developing rapidly, particularly with the introduction of low earth orbit (LEO) satellites and development of the SkyMuster service by nbn Co. While there is only one LEO service provider currently operating in Australia, a further five may provide services within the next three years. This is a critical technology opportunity that needs to be better understood in the context of securing accessible, reliable telecommunications. There are limits to the number of connections per cell, which may limit the applicability of this type of technology, especially in peri-urban areas. A possible model is consumer equipment seamlessly switching between fibre, conventional mobile and satellite systems depending on availability and in so doing, providing two levels of redundancy. This Review provides an opportunity to examine the role satellite based services will play in providing resilience and redundancy for the telecommunications systems and in providing services that are yet to be available in some locations, including peri-urban areas.

4.4. Roaming

Telstra is the dominant provider of mobile telephone services in rural, regional and remote Western Australia. For most people who live and work outside of the urban areas, Telstra is their only viable mobile service provider. However, there remains a strong desire for roaming to be enabled, at least in times of emergency and initiated quickly. This would provide an increased level of security for travellers, as well as an alternative, in some places, should the Telstra network be unavailable. We note that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission concluded that mobile roaming during emergencies was technically feasible⁴ while acknowledging there are issues that network operators and government will need to address in order to implement this capability. Given the reliance of the community and emergency services on the mobile network the government should initiate the steps needed to achieve mobile roaming.

4.5. Other solutions

The \$50 million Telecommunications Disaster Resilience Innovation Program including the Power Resilience Round and Innovation Round announced by the Commonwealth Government in 2023 as part of the Better Connectivity Plan for rural and regional Australia may identify solutions that can be deployed at sufficient scale to deliver a step change in the reliability and resilience of the telecommunications systems in rural and remote Australia.

Recommendations

Identify mechanisms to encourage or require telecommunications carriers to identify the most vulnerable parts of the network to power failures and establish plans to greatly increase resilience against power failure.

Encourage development of cost-effective standalone power supply systems.

Evaluate the role of accessible satellite services to provide resilience for mobile and broadband services, particularly during emergencies.

Initiate the steps to achieve timely mobile roaming during times of emergency and potentially more broadly.

⁴ Australian Competition and Consumer Commission July 2023 [Regional mobile infrastructure Inquiry](#) Accessed 10 April 2024

5. Choice and Cost

New technologies and providers are establishing a presence to provide choices for rural and regional consumers to access the Internet including fibre, wireless (with a range of suppliers), satellite and low earth orbit satellite services. However, for extensive mobile telephone coverage, outside of the urban areas Telstra provides the most extensive coverage in Western Australia.

The absence of service from Optus and other providers in regional WA is frequently a surprise to tourists and potentially leads to a negative experience.

Successful co-hosting of Optus and Telstra services on a significant number of towers in the Midlands region provides a model for how customer choice can be provided without duplicating infrastructure unnecessarily.

Wireless internet services have expanded significantly in rural areas and now provide a choice, particularly for businesses with large data needs. Opportunities to effectively expand this offering should continue to be explored.

6. Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion generally refers to the capability of individuals or groups to enjoy the benefits of being online and use technology confidently to improve their day-to-day lives. It encompasses a range of issues including access to digital technologies which is impacted by the quality and reliability of broadband and mobile services; by affordability relative to other living expenses as well as the digital literacy skills to both choose the right equipment and services and then use the digital services available. The connectivity and affordability pillars of the Western Australian Digital Inclusion Blueprint are particularly relevant to rural, regional and remote areas. Digital inclusion offers a potentially useful framework to assess equity of telecommunications services between regional and urban areas.

There is anticipated to be a negative social impact on communities from digital exclusion, as a result of the inability of some of the most vulnerable to replace 3G devices in order to access mobile services after June 2024.

More broadly, regional Australians are much more likely to depend on telehealth services and access Government services online, as there is no in person alternative, and use commercial services including shopping and banking on line, again because the alternatives are too expensive or not available. From an equity perspective, this means that being digitally enabled is even more important for regionally based Australians. However, the data indicates that those outside of the Capital Cities have significantly lower digital ability⁵. Through library services and Community Resource Centres, Local Governments are actively involved in supporting and enabling people to improve their digital ability. These activities should be resourced and supported.

Without equal opportunities to access digital technology throughout regional Western Australia, innovation and international competitiveness of businesses and industries will likely suffer.

Recommendations

Utilise a digital inclusion framework to identify the constraints facing regional Australians participation in the digital world and develop strategies and programs tailored to regions and communities to overcome these barriers.

6.1. Essential Service Delivery

Residents and businesses in regional Western Australia are more dependent than ever before on access to the internet to access basic government and business services. The physical presence of businesses and government in regional Western Australia continues to contract. Many regions now have no physical banking presence, with all services delivered online. A wide range of goods and services are accessed using on-line purchasing platforms. Accessible, reliable and capable telecommunications underpin access to all of these services.

⁵ [Thomas, J., McCosker, A., Parkinson, S., Hegarty, K., Featherstone, D., Kennedy, J., Holcombe-James, I., Ormond-Parker, L., & Ganley, L. \(2023\). Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: Australian Digital Inclusion Index: 2023. Melbourne: ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, and Telstra.](#)

7. Universal Service Obligations

Infrastructure Australia notes that while the overall telecommunications industry is competitive and expanding rapidly, the specific needs of rural and remote users are often overlooked in upgrades to national telecommunications infrastructure⁶. There remains a clear need for universal service obligations to drive more equitable access to telecommunications services in rural and remote areas. A contemporary USO should include performance criteria for service availability and maximum times to restore services. Regional and remote towns report that multi-day failures of both mobile and broadband services are not uncommon. The impact of this on business and the wider community would not be accepted in urban Australia. If implemented well this should provide appropriate signals for carriers to invest in the maintenance required to keep services available.

The Universal Service Obligations, including specification of the technology to be provided no longer delivers equitable access to telecommunications services across Australia. Several detailed studies have examined potential changes to the Universal Service Obligations arrangements.

Recommendations

The universal service obligations should be defined in terms of services provided, cost, reliability and resilience. The technology should not be specified, to enable options including satellite to be considered, provided the levels of service are guaranteed.

Universal service obligations should include service standards (reliability, repair time) for mobile and broadband services in regional Australia.

⁶ [Infrastructure Australia, Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019 Accessed 12 April 2024](#)

Public Administration Committee

Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications in Western Australia

WALGA Submission



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

Our membership includes all 139 Local Governments in the State. WALGA uses its influence, support and expertise to deliver better outcomes for WA Local Governments and their communities.

We do this through effective advocacy to all levels of Government on behalf of our Members and by the provision of expert advice, services and support to Local Governments.

WALGA's vision is for agile and inclusive Local Governments enhancing community wellbeing and enabling economic prosperity.

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Executive Summary

Telecommunications services are of critical importance to Local Governments, enabling delivery of emergency management responsibilities, economic development objectives and community aspirations for safe, attractive, liveable places. This Inquiry is important because the specific needs of rural, regional and remote communities are often overlooked in the development of telecommunications infrastructure and services.

Local Governments in regional, rural and remote Western Australia report that access to telecommunications services is not equitable across Australia in relation to:

- mobile service coverage;
- choice and therefore cost of mobile service provider;
- speed, capacity and cost of internet services; and
- reliability and resilience of mobile and broadband services.

To reduce the inequity of access to telecommunications services, this submission recommends that the State Government advocate effectively with the Australian Government and industry to:

1. Achieve an effective audit of mobile coverage as soon as possible, identifying the level of service that should be expected at each location.
2. Ensure that the extent of mobile service coverage does not diminish as a result of replacing existing 3G services with 4G and 5G.
3. Refine the Mobile Black Spot Program design to encourage solutions that provide effective coverage without needing multiple SIMS and mobile plans.
4. Encourage telecommunications carriers to monitor and report the level of broadband and mobile service and adjust capacity to meet peak demand in areas that have significant changes in population throughout the year.
5. Identify mechanisms to encourage or require telecommunications carriers to identify the most vulnerable parts of the network to power failures and work with power providers and others to greatly increase resilience against power failure.
6. Achieve timely mobile roaming during times of emergency and potentially more broadly.

The State Government should:

1. Continue to co-invest with the Australian Government and telecommunications industry to increase mobile and broadband service coverage.
2. Ensure that new developments such as mines that may significantly increase data and mobile voice demand relative to existing capacity make provision to service these needs.
3. Invest in the development and deployment of cost-effective standalone power supply systems at telecommunications facilities including mobile base stations and nodes through Western Power and Horizon Power if this is more effective and reliable than relying on telecommunications companies to do this.
4. Evaluate the role of accessible satellite services to provide resilience for mobile and broadband services, particularly during emergencies.
5. Utilise a digital inclusion framework to identify the constraints facing regional Australians' participation in the digital world and develop strategies and programs tailored to regions and communities to overcome these barriers.

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1. Introduction

Western Australian Local Governments have a general power to provide for the good governance of people in their district. In addition to legislative functions, the executive functions of Local Government include provision of services and facilities. A Local Government can provide any service or facility that is necessary for the good governance of the people in its district. However, before providing a service or facility, a Local Government must satisfy itself that the service or facility integrates with State or Commonwealth services, does not inappropriately duplicate any State, Commonwealth or private service, and is managed efficiently and effectively. Consequently, Western Australian Local Governments are generally not providers of utility services including water, power or telecommunications.

However, telecommunications services are of critical importance to Local Governments enabling delivery of their:

- emergency management responsibilities;
- economic development objectives; and
- vision to create safe, attractive, liveable places.

Consequently, Local Governments in rural, regional and remote areas are concerned about the inadequacy of telecommunications services and advocate to Federal and State Governments as well as industry for equitable access to those services needed by residents, businesses and visitors to the area.

Local Governments in regional, rural and remote Western Australia report that their access to telecommunications services is not equitable in relation to:

- mobile service coverage;
- choice and therefore cost of mobile service provider;
- speed, capacity and cost of internet services; and
- reliability and resilience of mobile and broadband services.

Despite significant investment and further planned investment in service offerings and increasing the resilience of telecommunications infrastructure to power failures, these issues remain. However, in the past three years low earth orbit satellite services have become available to retail customers and there has been significant changes to the wireless and satellite broadband service offerings. This Inquiry provides an opportunity to better identify the role these newer technologies will play in achieving cost effective, resilient, equitable access to telecommunications services that are used by those living and working outside Western Australia's major urban centres. If these technologies are to play a significant role, then measures will be required to ensure that these are accessible throughout the community.

2. Mobile Service Coverage

Rural, regional and remote Local Governments acknowledge and value the investment by the Western Australian State Government to leverage Commonwealth Government and telecommunications companies' investment through the Mobile Black Spot Program. It is important to highlight that recent investments continue to have a positive impact, including in areas relatively close to Perth and major regional centres. However, significant parts of Western Australia currently have no mobile telephone coverage and can only access the internet and voice communications using satellite-based services.

2.1. Accuracy and Relevance of Mobile Coverage Maps

Telecommunications carriers publish coverage maps for 3G, 4G and 5G networks. However, feedback from the community is that these do not provide reliable information at a local scale. The 2022 Federal election commitment to conduct a national audit of mobile coverage is urgently required to better identify mobile coverage Black Spots, providing reliable information to consumers and enabling future investments by governments and industry to be effectively targeted.

For example, Pingelly is shown to have 4G coverage, but the community reports no mobile service in many parts of the town.

It is also important that the level of service that can be expected in a covered area is defined. NBN services typically rely on 4G as a back-up, and consumers switch to mobile services when fixed line services are unavailable. It needs to be clear whether "coverage" includes adequate capacity to utilise data driven services, including websites such as Emergency WA or apps providing news or time critical data (such as Bushfire.io).

2.2. 3G Network Closure

Based on the published mobile network coverage maps as at April 2024, significant lengths of key highways in Western Australia, including the Eyre Highway, Great Northern Highway and North West Coastal Highway, as well as other areas currently have only 3G or no mobile service. Prior to closure of the remaining 3G network, urgent action is required to address deficiencies in emergency communication and network connectivity to ensure the safety and well-being of residents and travellers in these regions.

The transition from 3G to more recent generation standards has not addressed the impacts on some of the most vulnerable community members, including the elderly and those without the means to upgrade to newer phones. Despite publicity, there remains a risk that some will be unable to access emergency services when 3G is no longer available.

2.3. Mobile Black Spot Program

There remains a need for an on-going program such as the Mobile Black Spot Program, to improve mobile telephone coverage in areas where the commercial outcomes will not support this investment. This includes both peri-urban areas, as well as rural, regional and remote. State

Government engagement and investment in this program has attracted investment from the Commonwealth.

While those living and traveling through regional, rural and remote Western Australia desire a choice of service providers, the current reality is that Telstra is the only service provider across large parts of Western Australia. The mobile Black Spot Program design responds to applications from carriers. However, there is a risk that the resultant investment does not deliver integrated service coverage across the region. To illustrate, Figure 1 shows telecommunications sites in the south-east of Western Australia. With funding support, a small number of towers have been installed in remote communities that are unlikely to provide service coverage to those travelling through. Similarly, community residents will be unable to access services while enroute to regional centres such as Kalgoorlie unless they have multiple SIM cards. Solutions that provide neutral host base stations that not only can but do support multi-carrier outcomes are likely to provide a more effective level of service.

The Mobile Black Spot Program continues to seek co-funding from Local Governments. This creates clear inequity, through an expectation that remote Local Governments, which demonstrably have the least financial capacity, are expected to co-fund telecommunications infrastructure that would be funded by industry in urban areas.

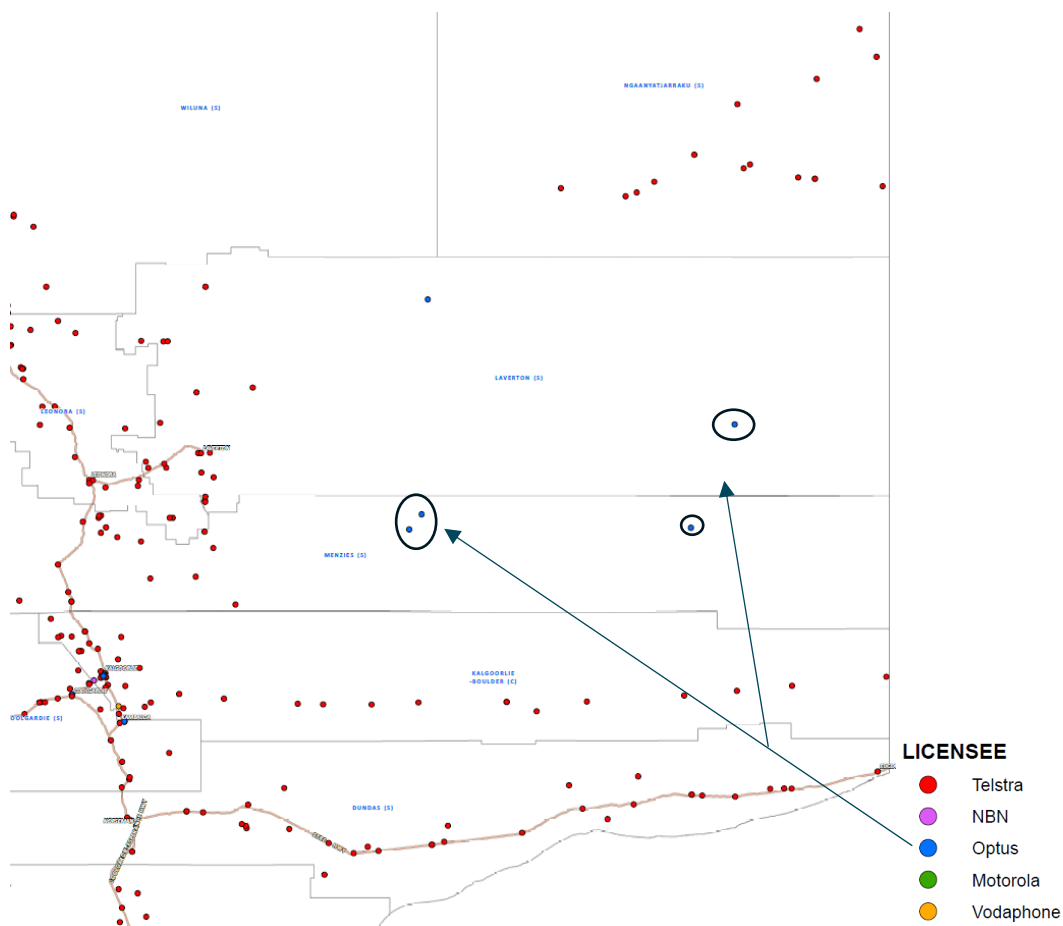


Figure 1: ACMA radio telecommunications sites in south-east Western Australia.

Recommendations

Advocate to the Commonwealth Government for an effective audit of mobile coverage as soon as possible, identifying the level of service that should be expected at each location.

Advocate to the Commonwealth Government and telecommunications carriers to ensure that the extent of mobile service coverage does not diminish as a result of replacing existing 3G services with 4G and 5G.

Continue to co-invest with the Commonwealth Government and telecommunications industry to increase mobile and broadband service coverage.

Advocate that the Mobile Black Spot Program design be refined to encourage solutions that provide effective coverage without needing multiple SIMS and mobile plans.

3. Speed and Capacity

Access to reliable, high-speed telecommunications is essential for establishing and growing businesses in regional Western Australia. Even businesses in traditional industries rely on online and telecommunication services to quote, invoice, bank, order stock, advertise, undertake training, engage with customers and a host of other activities. The lived experience of many in regional and remote Western Australia is poor performance of their mobile and internet services, particularly in areas that experience large seasonal increases in population. During the peak tourist season visitor population in some popular locations, such as Exmouth, can be three (or more) times the resident population. Towns that are not tourist destinations, but service travellers also report that the telecommunications services do not have sufficient capacity during peak periods, to the extent that even eftpos machines are unable to operate on the mobile network.

Growth in mining activity has resulted in step increases in demand for data capacity on specific parts of the mobile network, resulting in insufficient capacity to meet community needs. Approvals for new mines should require an assessment of telecommunication needs, with a requirement to fund upgrades to existing infrastructure or installing new mobile towers.

Amplifying devices such as YAGI antennae are readily available and used, but in some circumstances negatively impact on the level of service available to others.

There is evidence that the level of connectivity literacy may mean that cost effective options are available, particularly for internet services, that people may not be aware of.

Recommendations

Encourage telecommunications carriers to monitor and report the level of broadband and mobile service and adjust capacity to meet peak demand in areas that have significant changes in population throughout the year.

Ensure that new developments such as mines that may significantly increase data and mobile voice demand relative to existing capacity make provision to service these needs.

4. Reliability and Resilience

The Optus outage in November 2023 made national headlines and led to a Senate Committee Inquiry. Unplanned and planned outages in telecommunications services are a daily occurrence in regional Western Australia.

As a result of changing climate, Australia has seen and is expected to continue to suffer more frequent extreme weather events and consequences including floods, bushfires and storms (cyclones). Delivery of timely and effective emergency response is now dependent on telecommunications services working during these critical times. Tuning in to an am radio will not allow people to seek help, nor enable a volunteer SES crew or Bushfire Brigade to be mobilised.

Contemporary telecommunications are dependent on power supply throughout the network, including at the premises, nodes or mobile base stations, exchanges and other facilities. Reliability and resilience of power supplies in rural, regional and remote Western Australia is significantly worse than in urban and CBD areas. Based on data published by Western Power¹, the duration and frequency of power outages in rural areas was four to five times higher than in urban areas during 2022/23, noting that this was the best performance in the more remote rural areas in over a decade as a result of increased powerline maintenance and changes to operating procedures. It should also be highlighted that major (weather) events (two during the year) are excluded from the data. Horizon Power reports², on average slightly lower frequency of power outages than rural areas served by Western Power, with a total duration of outages within the range reported by Western Power for different types of rural customers.

The community, including emergency services, are very heavily dependent on mobile telecommunications. The lack of resilience in the telecommunications network was again recently highlighted in Western Australia in the aftermath of a severe storm that passed through parts of the Perth Hills, and Wheatbelt region on 16 January 2024. Given the extent of damage to the power network it took several days to restore the majority of power services and more than a week to reconnect all customers. Communities highlighted that mobile telephone services and internet access (nbn) failed in many places within hours of the power failures resulting people in a large part of the State being unable to access 000 services, volunteer fire and rescue services unable to communicate with volunteers and people unable to confirm the welfare of family and friends.

The battery back-up provided for telecommunications was demonstrated to be inadequate as was the capacity to quickly deploy and then maintain generators at many sites. Given that the track of the January 2024 storm cell was relatively small, compared with a cyclone for example, this event highlights the vulnerability of communities in rural, and remote areas to prolonged telecommunications outages. Cyclone Seroja, which struck the Mid West region of Western Australia in April 2021 had a significantly greater, and longer lasting impact on the availability of telecommunications. Cyclones are much more frequent in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions which regularly suffer telecommunications outages during these most critical periods.

Service providers including Western Power and nbn Co monitor their networks and provide information to customers about interruptions and anticipated times for repair. However, these initiatives are ineffective once the telecommunications networks fail.

Recognising that most people rely on their mobile phone to access information, the Western Australian Department of Fire and Emergency Services is investing significantly in upgrading

¹ Western Power, [Service Standard Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023](#) Accessed 10 April 2024

² Horizon Power [Network Quality and Reliability of Supply Code 2021/22 Performance Report](#) Accessed 10 April 2024

Emergency WA³, to provide the community with accurate timely information about emergencies in their area. This too will be ineffective, without reliable access to mobile telecommunications.

The joint Federal and State Government National Disaster Risk Reduction grants program supported an important project lead by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services with support from WALGA, telecommunications carriers and power utilities during 2022 and 2023 to create a consolidated dataset of mobile phone towers and their interdependency and link to power supply. The aim is to identify and prioritise investments to improve telecommunications availability and reliability. The technical and commercial sensitivities make implementation of this work difficult. However, we remain of the view that it is important to maximise the benefits from investments in improved resilience.

Given the very large number of telecommunications facilities that require uninterrupted power supply in order to provide a resilient network, a suite of solutions is likely required. These are considered in more detail below.

While telecommunications outages are often the result of power outages, there are concerns with the unreliability of mobile and broadband services in remote Western Australia unrelated to power. The Shire of Sandstone reports a recent six-day mobile telecommunications outage in the town that had a significant impact on businesses, including preventing supply of fuel and other goods and services. Extended loss of communication causes stress to residents, conscious that they are unable to contact medical services or other assistance should an emergency arise.

4.1. On-going Investment in new and renewed batteries

The Mobile Network Hardening Program has funded 12-hour battery back-up at 198 mobile sites in Western Australia and generators or other power system improvements at a further 44 locations. However, there are more than 1200 mobile towers in regional Western Australia, as well as other locations that must be powered for the system to operate. On-going, targeted investment in renewing and expanding the back-up power systems remains critical. It is important to ensure that the appropriate incentives and commercial systems are in place to achieve this.

4.2. Standalone Power Supply

Remotely managed, integrated, standalone power supply systems incorporating batteries, solar panels and if necessary diesel generators offer the potential to radically improve the reliability of power supplies to telecommunications facilities at all times, including during times of emergency. These remain costly, but it would appear that the relative cost is falling and opportunities to exploit economies of scale should be pursued. It is noted that in the north of the state, power supply batteries must be housed in such a way as to prevent deterioration due to extreme heat.

It is also important to ensure that there is effective communication between power providers, Western Power and Horizon Power, and the telecommunications companies when outages are planned. Local Governments identified occasions when planned power interruptions have resulted in loss of telecommunications leaving key facilities including schools and hospitals vulnerable.

³ [Local Company to deliver next generation Emergency WA](#)

4.3. Satellite Based Services

Funded through the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters Program (STAND), satellite enabled wifi services have been installed in 370 Local Government evacuation centres and similar facilities across the State. These are designed to offer a communications service during emergencies when people have been evacuated.

Satellite based service offerings are developing rapidly, particularly with the introduction of low earth orbit (LEO) satellites and development of the SkyMuster service by nbn Co. While there is only one LEO service provider currently operating in Australia, a further five may provide services within the next three years. This is a critical technology opportunity that needs to be better understood in the context of securing accessible, reliable telecommunications. There are limits to the number of connections per cell, which may limit the applicability of this type of technology, especially in peri-urban areas. A possible model is consumer equipment seamlessly switching between fibre, conventional mobile and satellite systems depending on availability and in so doing, providing two levels of redundancy. This Inquiry provides an opportunity to examine the role satellite based services will play in providing resilience and redundancy for the telecommunications systems and in providing services that are yet to be available in some locations, including peri-urban areas.

4.4. Roaming

Telstra is the dominant provider of mobile telephone services in rural, regional and remote Western Australia. For most people who live and work outside of the urban areas, Telstra is their only viable mobile service provider. However, there remains a strong desire for roaming to be enabled, at least in times of emergency and initiated quickly. This would provide an increased level of security for travellers, as well as an alternative, in some places, should the Telstra network be unavailable. We note that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission concluded that mobile roaming during emergencies was technically feasible⁴ while acknowledging there are issues that network operators and government will need to address in order to implement this capability. Telstra have advised that successful real time interoperability tests between carriers have been completed. Given the reliance of the community and emergency services on the mobile network the State Government should advocate strongly for mobile roaming to be provided quickly during bushfires, cyclones, floods and other emergencies.

4.5. Other solutions

The \$50 million Telecommunications Disaster Resilience Innovation Program including the Power Resilience Round and Innovation Round announced by the Commonwealth Government in 2023 as part of the Better Connectivity Plan for rural and regional Australia may identify solutions that can be deployed at sufficient scale to deliver a step change in the reliability and resilience of the telecommunications systems in rural and remote Australia.

⁴ Australian Competition and Consumer Commission July 2023 [Regional mobile infrastructure Inquiry](#) Accessed 10 April 2024

Recommendations

Advocate for and support telecommunications carriers to identify the most vulnerable parts of the network to power failures and work with power providers and others to establish plans to greatly increase resilience against power failure.

Invest in development and deployment of cost-effective standalone power supply systems at telecommunications facilities including mobile base stations and nodes through Western Power and Horizon Power if this is more effective and reliable than depending on telecommunications companies to do this.

Evaluate the role of accessible satellite services to provide resilience for mobile and broadband services, particularly during emergencies.

Advocate for timely mobile roaming during times of emergency and potentially more broadly.

5. Choice and Cost

New technologies and providers are establishing a presence to provide choices for rural and regional consumers to access the internet including fibre, wireless (with a range of suppliers), satellite and low earth orbit satellite services. However, for extensive mobile telephone coverage, outside of the urban areas Telstra provides the most extensive coverage in Western Australia.

The absence of service from Optus and other providers in regional WA is frequently a surprise to tourists and potentially leads to a negative experience.

Successful co-hosting of Optus and Telstra services on a significant number of towers in the Midlands region provides a model for how customer choice can be provided without duplicating infrastructure unnecessarily.

Wireless internet services have expanded significantly in rural areas and now provide a choice, particularly for businesses with large data needs. Opportunities to effectively expand this offering should continue to be explored.

6. Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion generally refers to the capability of individuals or groups to enjoy the benefits of being online and use technology confidently to improve their day-to-day lives. It encompasses a range of issues including access to digital technologies which is impacted by the quality and reliability of broadband and mobile services; by affordability relative to other living expenses as well as the digital literacy skills to both choose the right equipment and services and then use the digital services available. The connectivity and affordability pillars of the Western Australian Digital Inclusion Blueprint are particularly relevant to rural, regional and remote areas. Digital inclusion offers a potentially useful framework to assess equity of telecommunications services between regional and urban areas.

There is anticipated to be a negative social impact on communities from digital exclusion, as a result of the inability of some of the most vulnerable to replace 3G devices in order to access mobile services after June 2024.

More broadly, regional Australians are much more likely to depend on telehealth services and access Government services online, as there is no in person alternative, and use commercial services including shopping and banking on line, again because the alternatives are too expensive or not available. From an equity perspective, this means that being digitally enabled is even more important for regionally based Australians. However, the data indicates that those outside of the Capital Cities have significantly lower digital ability⁵. Through library services and Community Resource Centres, Local Governments are actively involved in supporting and enabling people to improve their digital ability. These activities should be resourced and supported.

Without equal opportunities to access digital technology throughout regional Western Australia, innovation and international competitiveness of businesses and industries will likely suffer.

Recommendations

Utilise a digital inclusion framework to identify the constraints facing regional West Australians participation in the digital world and develop strategies and programs tailored to regions and communities to overcome these barriers.

6.1. Essential Service Delivery

Residents and businesses in regional Western Australia are more dependent than ever before on access to the internet to access basic government and business services. The physical presence of businesses and government in regional Western Australia continues to contract. Many regions now have no physical banking presence, with all services delivered online. A wide range of goods and services are accessed using on-line purchasing platforms. Accessible, reliable and capable telecommunications underpin access to all of these services.

⁵ [Thomas, J., McCosker, A., Parkinson, S., Hegarty, K., Featherstone, D., Kennedy, J., Holcombe-James, I., Ormond-Parker, L., & Ganley, L. \(2023\). Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: Australian Digital Inclusion Index: 2023. Melbourne: ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, and Telstra.](#)

7.5 WALGA SUBMISSION – DRAFT LOCAL PLANNING SCHEME REGULATIONS 2015 (SHORT-TERM RENTAL ACCOMMODATION)

By Christopher Hossen, Policy Manager, Planning and Building

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the submission on the proposed amendments to the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015* related to Short-Term Rental Accommodation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The State Government is seeking comment on proposed amendments to the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015*.
- These changes relate to the Government's Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) reform agenda and support the establishment of the state-wide registration system for STRA properties.
- The changes include proposals for new and amended tourism related land-use definitions, and exemptions from planning approval for all Hosted STRA, and for Un-hosted STRA for periods up to 90-nights within a 12-month period, within the Perth Metropolitan Region.
- The changes will come into effect in Mid-2024, to align with the opening of the STRA Register.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Submission
2. Summary of Proposed Changes
3. STRA timeline

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The submission is consistent with and reaffirms [Advocacy Position 6.1 Planning Principles, 6.2 Planning Reform, and 6.13 Short-Stay Accommodation](#).

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

BACKGROUND

Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) refers to the practice of renting out a residential property (or part of a property) for a relatively short period of time, usually on a nightly or weekly basis. The State Government is [progressing](#) legislative and regulatory changes to improve regulation of the STRA sector through the introduction of a state-wide registration scheme and complimentary reforms to the planning system. The *Short-Term Rental Accommodation Bill 2024*, which provides for the creation and operation of the statewide STRA register, and registration scheme passed Parliament on 17 April 2024 and is scheduled to go live from July 1, 2024, and be mandatory from January 1, 2025.

The State Government is now proposing amendments to the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015* (LPS Regulations), to codify changes outlined in the in the document, *Position Statement: Planning for Tourism and Short-Term Rental Accommodation* and associated guidelines, released in November 2023.

The key elements of the proposed changes are:

- New and revised definitions related to STRA and tourism land uses,
- Exemption for planning approval for all Hosted STRA (state-wide), and
- Exemptions for Un-hosted STRA within the Perth metropolitan area.

These changes will have a mix of immediate and eventual impacts on local planning schemes, through the use of deemed and model provisions within the LPS Regulations.

A detailed summary of the proposed changes is at Attachment 2.

A detailed summary of the timeline of events and WALGA's involvement is at Attachment 3.

COMMENT

WALGA has participated in the STRA Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG), which has allowed Local Government issues and concerns to be considered during the development phases of the STRA regulatory and planning policy responses.

WALGA's submission supports the general intent of the amendments but expresses recommends the following changes:

The exemption of Un-hosted STRA from planning approval: Consistent with WALGA's advocacy position, the exemption of Un-hosted STRA is not supported and should be at the discretion of individual Local Government. While WALGA does not support the broad exemption, the Government has been clear about their intention on this matter, thus, WALGA has recommended that:

- The exemption be limited to a 60-day period,
- The exemption does not apply in areas identified as BPA Area 1 on the Draft Bushfire Prone Area Map, and
- The exemption has a 24-month sunset clause.

The proposed exemption will only apply to the Perth Metropolitan Region Scheme area; regional Local Governments will not be impacted by this proposal.

The proposed definition of Un-hosted STRA: the proposed definition places no controls on the number of persons able to be accommodated in each dwelling beyond a 12-person maximum. WALGA recommends that the definition of Un-hosted STRA be amended to include the requirement that each dwelling be only able to accommodate no more than 2 persons per bedroom to a maximum of 12 people per night.

The proposed definition of Hosted STRA: the proposed definition provides no limitations on guest numbers or number of rooms within a dwelling being used for STRA purposes. WALGA recommends that the proposed Hosted STRA definition be amended to include a maximum number of persons and bedrooms consistent with the current definition for Bed and Breakfast.

The Submission also includes detailed technical comments and recommendations.

WALGA has also hosted multiple sector information sessions related to both the state-wide registration scheme and proposed changes to the planning framework.

WALGA's submission has been informed by feedback from Local Governments, participation in the Interdepartmental Working Group, the Association's advocacy positions, and previous submissions.

The submission period closes on May 10, 2024.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Les Price
Seconded: President Chris Antonio

That State Council endorse the submission on the proposed amendments to the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015* related to Short-Term Rental Accommodation.

RESOLUTION 030.2/2024

CARRIED

WALGA Submission – Draft Short-Term Rental Accommodation Regulations

March 2024

Introduction

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) is an independent, member-based, not for profit organisation representing and supporting the WA Local Government sector. Our membership includes all 139 Local Governments in the State.

WALGA uses its influence, support and expertise to deliver better outcomes for WA Local Governments and their communities.

We advocate to all levels of Government on behalf of our Members, and provide expert advice, services and support to Local Governments.

WALGA's vision is for agile and inclusive Local Governments enhancing community wellbeing and enabling economic prosperity.

WALGA welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed amendments to the Planning & Development (Local Planning Scheme Regulations) 2015 (LPS Regulations), that relate to the State Governments short-term rental accommodation (STRA) reforms.

The STRA sector, and the tourism sector more broadly, plays a significant role in local economic development, providing employment, training opportunities, and injections of expenditure into local communities across the State. However, the significant impacts of the boom in STRA, such as noise, parking and waste management have been difficult for Local Governments and their communities to manage.

WALGA's comments on the LPS Regulations have been informed by direct engagement with Local Governments, participation in the Interdepartmental Working Group, the Association's advocacy positions, and previous submissions. Relevant Advocacy Positions are listed below.

6.1 Planning Principles

All legislation and policy which deals with planning and development must:

- a) Ensure role clarity and consistency across all legislation controlling development to avoid confusion of powers and responsibilities;*
- b) Be easily interpreted by, understood by and accessible to all sections of the community;*
- c) Be amended only with WALGA involvement and/or consultation/involvement with Local Government.*

6.2 Planning Reform

The Local Government sector supports the underlying principles of planning reform and the continuing focus of streamlining the planning system while ensuring Local Government retains the ability to respond to local context and characteristics through Local Planning Frameworks.

6.13 Short-Stay Accommodation

- 1. That the WAPC not endorse the draft Position Statement: Planning for Tourism and the associated Guidelines prior to:*

- a. *Additional engagement occurring with the Local Government sector, and specifically those Local Governments with significant tourism industries and knowledge and experience in the regulation of tourism land-uses,*
 - b. *The provision of further justification for the need to exempt un-hosted short-term accommodation from development approval, and specifically clarification on,*
 - i. *Zones in which the exemption would apply,*
 - ii. *Whether the exemption would apply in bushfire prone areas, flood prone areas, and other areas covered by special control areas,*
 - c. *Consideration of the recommendations outlined in Appendix 1 of this submission, and*
 - d. *Clarification being provided on the extent and ability of any state-wide registration scheme to address planning, amenity and management issues associated with both hosted and un-hosted short-term accommodation, that satisfies the WAPC that these issues can be suitably managed outside the planning system, particularly:*
 - i. *How the Scheme will allow for capturing and reporting of the number of days unhosted short-term accommodation is let in a calendar year, and*
 - ii. *How the Scheme's design will reduce the ability of hosts to 'game' the system to avoid the need for a development approval while letting their property for more than 60 days.*
2. *The interdepartmental working group be re-formed to guide the establishment of a state-wide registration scheme, and to include Local Government as a key stakeholder to ensure that the experience and knowledge of the sector informs the Scheme's formulation,*
 3. *That the establishment and operation of the state-wide registration scheme should be managed by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety,*
 4. *That the State allocate necessary financial resources to the lead agency to support the establishment of a 'fit-for purpose' state-wide registration scheme, and*
 5. *That the state-wide registration scheme be developed for both short-term accommodation and peer-to-peer platforms with the inclusion of the following features:*
 - a. *All hosted and un-hosted short-term accommodation must be required to be registered with the scheme before being able to advertise the property, and platforms must publish the registration number as part of the marketing and booking services,*
 - b. *All peer-to-peer platforms that seek to let short-term accommodation must be regulated through the scheme as a host platform,*
 - c. *Obligations of registration for both hosts and platforms must be clear and appropriate infringements and compliance tools should be embedded in the regulatory framework,*
 - d. *Local Governments must be able to maintain the ability to require the provision of additional information and impose additional licencing or operational requirements, depending on their circumstances, including both town planning and Local Government Act (Local Law) regulation,*
 - e. *Local Government's must be able to set fees commensurate with the cost of providing the service for any role undertaken as part of the scheme, and*
 - f. *Local Governments must have access to all necessary data collected by the scheme to adequately manage the potential impacts of short-term accommodation providers and to ensure local requirements are being met by hosts.*

Comment

WALGA welcomes the release of the proposed LPS Regulation, which in conjunction with the recently adopted *Position Statement: Planning for Tourism* and associated Guidelines, should provide a clear and consistent direction to Local Governments on the definition and treatment of STRA in the Western Australian planning system.

WALGA's previous comments on the then draft Position Statement and Guidelines highlighted the need to reform the planning framework to ensure the adequate regulation of the STRA sector. However, WALGA remains concerned around some elements of the reform package. The most

significant of these issues are detailed below with other comments provided in the attached comment table.

Review of Definitions

WALGA generally supports the consolidation of, and reduction in, the number of land-use definitions within the planning system, and the use of the model and deemed provisions to facilitate this outcome. **WALGA therefore supports the intent of the changes to land use definitions proposed in the LPS Regulations.**

The simplification of tourism land uses to better distinguish between traditional accommodation and STRA, and the alignment of these to the definitions used in the *Short-Term Rental Accommodation Bill 2024* (STRA Bill) and draft *Short-Term Rental Accommodation Regulations 2024* (STRA Regulations) is broadly supported. The tying of STRA based land uses to the dwelling definition is appropriate and better reflect this form of tourist accommodation, compared to traditional accommodation offerings is logical.

WALGA supports the establishment of definitions for Hosted and Un-hosted STRA, replacing the Bed and Breakfast and Holiday House definitions.

Regarding the Hosted STRA definition, the proposed definition provides no limitations on guest numbers or number of rooms within a dwelling being used for STRA purposes. Given the broad nature of the proposed exemption from planning approval proposed to the LPS Regulations, it is reasonable that some limitations be placed on the number of guests and number of bedrooms in the Hosted STRA definition. **WALGA recommends that the proposed Hosted STRA definition be amended to include a maximum number of persons and bedrooms consistent with the current definition for Bed and Breakfast.**

Regarding Un-hosted STRA, WALGA is concerned with the lack of controls on the number of persons able to be accommodated in each dwelling. The proposed definition provides no controls over how many people could occupy a dwelling beyond the 12-person maximum. There is only one definition for all forms of Un-Hosted STRA, and this form of development can occur in any form or size of dwelling. Providing only a maximum occupancy requirement is an overly blunt instrument, that could see large groups letting unsuitable dwellings, which will in turn exacerbate the likelihood of conflict between permanent residents and STRA guests.

WALGA recommends that the definition of Un-Hosted STRA be amended to include the requirement that each dwelling be only able to accommodate no more than 2 persons per bedroom to a maximum of 12 people per night to reduce the impact on Un-hosted STRA on permanent residents.

Exemptions from Development Approval

WALGA supports the exemption of Hosted STRA state-wide. This support should be read in conjunction with the comments raised in the attached comment sheet regarding placing limitations on the number of people and bedrooms within the Hosted STRA definition.

WALGA does not support exempting Un-hosted STRA within the LPS Regulations. Consistent with WALGA's previous submissions on this topic, the exemption of Un-hosted STRA should be at the discretion of the Local Government, following consultation with their community.

WALGA supports the exemption not being applied outside the Perth metropolitan area. This approach appropriately recognises that Local Governments are best placed to determine land use permissibility in line with their local context and community views. **WALGA believes that the same approach should be applied state-wide.**

WALGA does not support the broad exemption for Un-hosted STRA. Should the Government determine to progress with the exemption, WALGA recommends that:

- the exemption be limited to a 60-day period,

- the exemption does not apply in areas identified as BPA Area 1 on the Draft Bushfire Prone Area Map, and
- the exemption has a 24-month sunset clause.

Further rationale for these recommendations is outlined in the attached comment sheet.

WALGA's comments and recommendations take a long-term view to the proposed LPS Regulations and seek to further strengthen the operation of the State Government's STRA reforms, while ensuring reasonable protections are put in place to protect residential amenity and neighbourhood character.

Should you wish to discuss this submission, please contact Chris Hossen, Policy Manager, Planning and Building at chossen@walga.asn.au.

WALGA Submission - Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015 (STRA)

April 2024

<i>Regulation</i>	<i>Detail of proposed regulation</i>	<i>WALGA Comment</i>
Schedule 1 clause 37(1) Amended definitions for Cabin and Chalet	Existing general definitions for Cabin and Chalet to be amended to remove cross reference to the deleted 'short-term accommodation' definition. Details of the length of stay to be inserted into the definition	<p>The re-wording of the two definitions is supported. WALGA has generally supported consolidation of and reduction in the number of definitions within the planning framework. The proposed changes are necessary to avoid confusion from the establishment of the new STRA definition, and clarification that a Cabin and Chalet are not STRA but fall within the traditional accommodation umbrella terms.</p> <p>The proposed wordings of both Cabin and Chalet use the phrasing, 'forming part of a tourist development or caravan park' in the chapeau of the definitions. It is unclear if the term 'tourist development' here should in fact read 'tourist complex', to align the Cabin and Chalet definition to the new definition of tourist complex. WALGA recommends that this be clarified.</p>
Schedule New Tourist Complex & Visitor accommodation definition	<p>A new definition of Tourist Complex is proposed to replace the deleted land use classes of Holiday Accommodation, Motel and Tourist Development.</p> <p>This new definition is also intended to cover larger Bed & Breakfast, Farm Stay, Chalets</p>	<p>While the simplification of tourism land uses to better distinguish between traditional accommodation and STRA is supported, the form tourism accommodation takes on the ground, still strongly align with the current definitions, and those terms still hold weight when considering development controls for different types of tourism accommodation at a local level. It is likely that those terms will remain in colloquial use and use in Local Planning Policies for some time.</p>

<p>Deletion of following definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bed and breakfast • holiday accommodation • holiday house • motel • serviced apartment • tourist development 	<p>and similar styles of 'traditional' accommodation.</p>	<p>The <i>Planning for Tourism and Short-term Rental Accommodation Guidelines</i> and the <i>Position Statement: Planning for Tourism and Short-term Rental Accommodation</i> are clear that Local Governments can adopt local planning policies to inform land use and development controls to suit their local context. WALGA believes this approach is appropriate and reflects the need for Local Governments to have control of local development requirements.</p> <p>It is unclear why the Hotel definition has been retained and not incorporated into the new Tourist Complex or Visitor Accommodation definitions. The proposed tourist complex definition aligns closely with the current definition of Hotel, except for the current reference to the Liquor Control Act 1988 and the potential for a betting agency on site.</p> <p>WALGA understands that the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), is currently undertaking a review of the <i>Liquor Control Act 1998</i> that includes the suitability of the current licence types. The inclusion of the current Hotel definition in the LPS Regulations may no longer be relevant following this review, and thus consideration of un-linking land-use definitions to the liquor licence categories should also be considered as part of this review.</p> <p>WALGA recommends that the current Hotel definition be deleted and replaced by the proposed Tourist Complex definition, and that modifications be considered that seek to incorporate elements more commonly found in hotels, such a betting agency, into sub-point 2 of this definition.</p> <p><i>Omission of grouped and multiple dwelling site where whole site is used for STRA</i></p> <p>Local Governments in recent years have experienced a new form of STRA, where an entire set of grouped and multiple dwelling units, initially approved as separate residential dwellings, are being let out as STRA by one individual or party. These are often in sets of 6-8 dwellings and have</p>
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		<p>no shared facilities, no on-site manager present and are generally not subdivided.</p> <p>WALGA does not support the use of entire grouped and multiple dwelling complexes as un-hosted STRA, where all properties in the complex are managed by one individual or party, unless supported by the Local Government. This issue is further exacerbated by the decision to exempt un-hosted STRA from the requirement from seeking planning approval for 90 days in a calendar year.</p> <p>The removal of entire blocks of units and apartment from the housing and rental markets will likely have a greater impact on housing affordability than the removal of individual dwellings for short periods of the year.</p> <p>The proposed definitions of Tourist Complex, Visitor Accommodation, and STRA do not adequately address this new form of development. Such a land use does not fit the Tourist Complex definition, as there are no shared facilities or use by the public or the guest; nor do they meet the 10 or more accommodation unit requirements for Visitor Accommodation. Further, while the individual units may be classed as un-hosted STRA, but as a whole complex it is arguably not the intended purpose of that definition either.</p> <p>To address this omission, WALGA recommends amendments be made to the definition of Visitor Accommodation to allow the inclusion of this form of development. Such a change will likely necessitate a change to the STRA definition.</p>
<p>Schedule 2 clause 1 Hosted short-term rental accommodation definition</p>	<p>A new land use definition for Hosted STRA* - where the owner/occupier of the dwelling remains on the premises – is proposed. It is intended that this use will be inserted into local planning scheme zoning tables to replace 'Bed and Breakfast'.</p>	<p>WALGA supports the inclusion of the definition of hosted STRA and supports the subsequent deletion of the bed and breakfast definition. The use of the terms hosted and un-hosted aligns with distinctions made in the <i>STRA Bill</i> and the draft <i>STRA Regulations</i>. It is important that the two regulatory arms of the State’s response to STRA regulation are consistent.</p> <p><i>Number of Guests and Number of Rooms</i></p>

	<p>Definition:</p> <p>hosted short-term rental accommodation means short-term rental accommodation where the owner or occupier of the dwelling, or an agent of the owner or occupier who ordinarily resides at the dwelling, resides at the same dwelling during the short-term rental arrangement;</p>	<p>The proposed definition provides no limitations on guest numbers or number of rooms within a dwelling being used for STRA purposes.</p> <p>The current model definition of Bed and Breakfast means a dwelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) used by a resident of the dwelling to provide short-term accommodation, including breakfast, on a commercial basis for not more than 4 adult persons or one family; and b) containing not more than 2 guest bedrooms; <p>Most local planning scheme currently require development approval for Bed and Breakfast proposals in residential areas.</p> <p>Given the broad nature of the proposed exemption from planning approval proposed to the LPS Regulations, it is reasonable that some limitations be placed on the number of guests and number of bedrooms in the hosted STRA definition.</p> <p>WALGA recommends that the proposed hosted STRA definition should be amended to include a maximum number of persons and bedrooms consistent with the current definition for Bed and Breakfast.</p> <p><i>Ancillary Accommodation as Hosted STRA</i></p> <p>WALGA's previous comments have recommended that the definition of Hosted STRA should include the use of ancillary accommodation on a site where the host is present in the primary dwelling.</p> <p>The current definition for ancillary accommodation in the LPS Regulations refers to the definition in State Planning Policy 7.3 Residential Design Codes (R-Codes), which states:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>self-contained dwelling on the same site as a dwelling which may be attached to, integrated with or detached from the dwelling.</i></p> <p>The proposed Hosted STRA definition requires the owner or occupier to reside in the same dwelling. As an ancillary dwelling is defined as a self-contained dwelling the current wording would seem to limit their use as</p>
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		<p>Hosted STRA to situations where the usual occupant of that dwelling, meaning the ancillary dwelling, resides in the same.</p> <p>In practice an ancillary dwelling, when let for STRA purposes will be let in an un-hosted manner. However, the presence of the owner or resident on the site (in the main dwelling), and the ability to manage, off-site impacts and amenity issue, should see ancillary dwellings treated as Hosted STRA.</p> <p>WALGA recommends that the proposed definition of Hosted STRA be amended to reflect that ancillary accommodation, where the owner or occupier of the primary dwelling during the short-term rental agreement, is Hosted STRA.</p>
<p>Schedule 2 clause 1 Un-hosted short-term rental accommodation definition</p>	<p>A new definition for Unhosted STRA. Where the owner/occupier of the dwelling does not reside on the premises.</p> <p>This use will be inserted into local planning scheme zoning tables to replace 'Holiday House'.</p> <p>Definition:</p> <p>unhosted short-term rental accommodation means short-term rental accommodation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) is not hosted short-term rental accommodation; and d) accommodates 12 people or fewer per night; 	<p>WALGA supports the proposal to delete the current holiday home definition and replace it with an Un-hosted STAR definition. As stated above, WALGA has generally supported consolidation of and reduction in the number of definitions within the planning framework.</p> <p>However, the proposed wording of the definition, coupled with the exemption from development approval in the metropolitan region, is a matter of concern. In effect, the combination of the two would allow the holiday letting of any dwelling in the Perth metropolitan region, for a period of 90 days per year, for up to 12 persons. The combination of the exemption alongside the broad wording of the definition is not appropriate and requires modification to reduce the impact on residents.</p> <p>Currently, several Local Governments use definitions to distinguish between holiday homes in single houses and either grouped or multiple dwelling, or by number of guests. Generally, land-use permissibility and number of guests vary between the two definitions with lower maximum guests' numbers on proposals in grouped and multiple dwellings.</p> <p>The advertised version of the draft Position Statement proposed that two new and one amended definition related to Un-hosted STRA be incorporated into the LPS Regulations as a model provision. The final</p>

		<p>adopted version of the Position Statement has removed this approach. While there remains merit in splitting the land-use definitions by dwelling type, it is acknowledged that this approach would not align well with the overall intent to refine and standard land-use definitions.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the definition of Un-hosted STRA be amended to read:</p> <p>Unhosted short-term rental accommodation means short-term rental accommodation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) is not hosted short-term rental accommodation; and b) accommodates no more than 2 persons per bedroom to a maximum of 12 people per night. <p>As STRA by definition can only occur within a dwelling in a residential context, it is appropriate to ensure that the number of people within an un-hosted STRA is broadly the same as the number that would normally occupy a dwelling. The current proposed definition provides no controls over how many people could occupy a dwelling beyond the 12-person maximum. In effect it would be possible to place 2 sets of bunk beds in both bedroom of a 60 sqm 2-bedroom apartment, and have 2 others sleeping in the living room, allowing 10 persons total. It is not unreasonable to assume that such an occurrence would place an unreasonable burden on the other residents of the apartment complex, and likely have a deleterious impact amenity and public health outcomes.</p> <p>This recommendation should be read alongside WALGA’s comments on the proposed exemption from development approval for some Un-hosted STRA, outlined below.</p>
<p>Schedule 2 clause 1 New short-term rental accommodation</p>	<p>A new general definition for STRA is proposed. Definition:</p>	<p>WALGA supports the inclusion of a broad STRA land use definition to clearly distinguish between contemporary STRA, within a dwelling, and</p>

	<p><i>short-term rental accommodation</i> –</p> <p>a) means a dwelling provided, on a commercial basis, for occupation under a short-term rental arrangement; but</p> <p>b) does not include –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. a caravan park; or ii. visitor accommodation; or iii. a tourist complex; or iv. workforce accommodation; or v. a dwelling designed and used for the purpose of aged care or dependant persons accommodation; or vi. a retirement village as defined in the Retirement Villages Act 1992 section 3(1); or vii. a park home park; or viii. a residential building used as a lodging-house as defined in the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911 section 3(1); 	<p>traditional forms of tourist accommodation, such as a hotel, caravan park or serviced apartment.</p> <p>As per WALGA's previous submission on STRA reforms, WALGA recommends the inclusion of words in this definition that highlight the commercial element of a STRA land-use.</p> <p>These comments should be read in conjunction with WALGA's concerns above related to the omission of grouped and multiple dwelling site where whole site is used for STRA as part of the Visitor Accommodation definition.</p>
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<p>Schedule 2 clause 61 Planning exemptions</p>	<p>These clauses detail proposed exemptions for STRA - as outlined in the WAPC's Tourism and Short-Term Rental Accommodation Position Statement (November 2023).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Hosted STRA is to be exempt state-wide d) Unhosted STRA to be exempt for up to 90 nights within a 12- month period in the Perth Metropolitan Area. <p>It is also proposed to include an additional clause be inserted that ensure that the 90-night exemption for the Perth metropolitan region cannot be extended through a local planning policy or local development plan adopted under cl.61(2)(g).</p>	<p>Hosted STRA</p> <p>WALGA supports the exemption of Hosted STRA state-wide. This support should be read in conjunction with the comments raised above regarding placing limitations on the number of people and bedrooms within the Hosted STRA definition.</p> <p>Un-hosted STRA</p> <p>WALGA does not support the exempting of un-hosted STRA within the LPS Regulations. Considering the growth in the number of STRA properties, and the known impact this is having on housing affordability and community amenity, it is disappointing that the proposed exemption of 60 days, as advertised in the draft Position Statement, has been extended to 90 days.</p> <p>Consistent with WALGA's previous submissions on this topic, WALGA considers that the exemption of Un-hosted STRA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Should be at the discretion of the Local Government, following consultation with their community, 2. Has enforcement practicalities for many Local Governments that have established comprehensive regulatory regimes the change would mean a significant reduction in the ability to adequately manage STRA and manage the amenity issues in line with community expectations, 3. Removes the ability for Local Governments to restrict the permissibility of Un-hosted STRA, where there are known amenity and housing affordability issues, and 4. Does not take into consideration natural hazard risks, such as flood-prone areas and bushfire prone areas. <p>WALGA is pleased that the exemption is not to be applied outside the Perth metropolitan area. This approach appropriately recognises that Local Governments are best placed to determine land use permissibility in</p>
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		<p>line with their local context and community views. WALGA believes that the same approach should be applied state-wide.</p> <p>WALGA's comments should be read in conjunction with the proposed amendments to the Un-hosted STRA definition, above.</p> <p>Should the Government determine to progress with the exemption of un-Hosted STRA through the LPS Regulations, WALGA recommends that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be limited to a 60-day period, • not apply in areas identified as BPA Area 1 on the Draft Bushfire Prone Area Map, and • have a 24-month sunset clause. <p>Limiting the exemption to 60 days will support true home sharing arrangements, as opposed to properties being let out for all school holiday periods each year. This will limit the exemptions impact on housing affordability by ensuring that properties are not taken out of the traditional housing market for use as STRA. STRA would remain a discretionary land use as outlined in the <i>Position Statement: Planning for Tourism and Short-term Rental Accommodation</i>. Thus, those seeking to let their property for the entire year would retain a pathway for approval.</p> <p>WALGA believes a sunset clause is warranted considering the fast pace of change in STRA regulation, both in Australia and around the world, and the ongoing housing affordability crisis. Further, a sunset clause would allow the full impact of the exemption to be understood, prior to the Government making a long-term commitment. These impacts would be supported by data from the STRA Register on the extent of STRA properties across Western Australia. A sunset clause would also temper expectations that the exemption is an established part of the planning system, thus providing Government with greater flexibility should the impacts of exempting STRA be determined as a negative to community.</p>
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Model Provisions are provisions that Local Governments can choose to incorporate into their Local Planning Scheme.

Model Provisions – Definition Changes

DELETE	AMEND	NEW
<p>GENERAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term accommodation <p>LAND USE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bed & Breakfast • Holiday House • Holiday Accommodation • Motel • Serviced Apartment • Tourist Development 	<p>GENERAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabin • Chalet <p>LAND USE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road House 	<p>LAND USE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist Complex • Visitor Accommodation

Traditional Accommodation Definitions

EXISTING	REPLACEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday Accommodation • Motel • Tourist Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist Complex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serviced Apartment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Accommodation

✓ Hotel – unchanged

Tourist Complex & Visitor Accommodation

TOURIST COMPLEX

- Deliberately broad
- Would include many business who advertise as 'B&Bs'
- Could also include Farm Stay and Chalets

VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

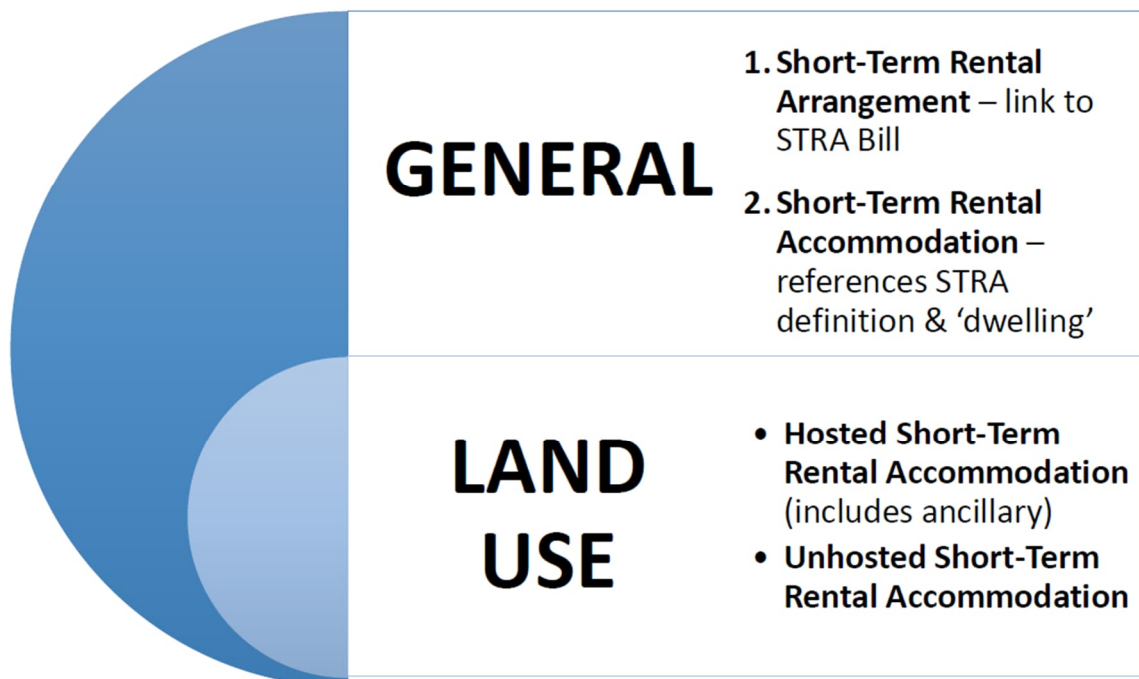
- Reflects terminology used in other jurisdictions
- Intended to be purpose-built (e.g. Quest)
- Minimum 10 units proposed
- Number of exclusions

Deemed Provisions are read as being part of a Local Planning Scheme. They prevail over Scheme provisions where there are inconsistencies.

Deemed Provisions – Definition Changes

AMEND	NEW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Habitable Building<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ delete from bushfire cl. 72A○ insert into 'deemed' general definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-term rental arrangement• Short-Term Rental Accommodation• Hosted Short-Term Rental Accommodation• Unhosted Short-Term Rental Accommodation

Deemed STRA Definitions



Deemed Provisions – Cl. 61 Exemptions*

Delivering key reform commitments:

HOSTED STRA	UNHOSTED STRA	BUSHFIRE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exempt state-wide• Includes ancillary dwellings – i.e. these must be ‘on the same site as another dwelling’	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 90 nights within the Perth Metropolitan (MRS) Area• Cannot be undone through a local planning policy• Monitored through registration scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These exemptions apply despite bushfire status• Where a DA is required for STRA, SPP 3.7 can still be applied.

In 2017, WALGA prepared a *Short-Term Rental Accommodation Discussion Paper* in consultation with Local Governments, which informed the following advocacy policy position endorsed by WALGA State Council in December 2017:

1. That WALGA request the Minister for Planning to establish, through the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, a Technical Working Group, with a goal to reviewing the planning framework in relation to short-term rental accommodation, that gives consideration to:
2. A review of Planning Bulletin 99 – Holiday Home Guidelines, with a particular emphasis on expanding the scope of Planning Bulletin 99 beyond 'Holiday Homes', to reflect changes in the accommodation market,
3. A review of 'Land Use' definitions within the Planning framework that relate to short-term accommodation, and
4. Establishing a 'preferred' approach for the management of 'home-sharing' within the planning framework.

In 2019, WALGA provided a submission to the Legislative Assembly Economics and Industry Standing Committee [Inquiry into Short-Stay Accommodation](#). The findings and recommendations of the Inquiry, tabled in September 2019, were broadly welcomed by the sector. Recommendations 2, 3, and 7 through 10 were consistent with the Association's adopted policy advocacy positions. The State Government [generally agreed](#) with the findings and recommendations of the Standing Committee's Inquiry.

In March 2022, in response to the release for public comment on the *draft Position Statement: Planning for Tourism and associated Guidelines*, and simultaneous request for views on the design of the state-wide registration scheme for STRA, State Council considered and endorsed an updated advocacy position, that position remains current.

This advocacy position was informed by comprehensive comment from members, particularly those most impacted by STRA and the proposed regulatory approach.

Throughout 2023 and 2024 WALGA alongside, DPLH, DEMIRS and DLGSC, participated in the STRA Interdepartmental Working Group. This allowed Local Government to voice the concerns and needs of the sector throughout the development phase of the STRA regulatory scheme. WALGA facilitated multiple sector webinars and information sessions during this time.

The Short-Term Rental Accommodation Bill 2024 was tabled in Parliament in February 2024. The design and scope of the register is broadly consistent with WALGA's advocacy position.

In March, 2024 WALGA provided comments on the draft *Short-Term Rental Accommodation Regulations 2024*.

The STRA Bill passed Parliament on 17 April 2024. The register will become live from July 1, 2024, and then become mandatory from 1 January 2025.

7.6 FINANCE AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – 17 APRIL 2024

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Finance and Services Committee meeting held on 17 April 2024 be endorsed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Finance and Services Committee met on 17 April 2024.
- The Minutes of the meeting have been distributed to members of State Council under separate cover.

ATTACHMENTS – CONFIDENTIAL

- Finance and Services Committee Minutes – 17 April 2024
- Attachments to Minutes:
 - WALGA Finance Report 31 March 2024

BACKGROUND

The Finance and Services Committee met on 21 February 2024.

The Minutes of the meeting, together with attachments, have been distributed to members of State Council under separate cover.

COMMENT

In addition to the standard finance and services reporting, the Finances and Services Committee were provided an update on the WALGA Budget Process for 2024-25.

Finance and Services Committee members will be in attendance at the State Council meeting to respond to questions and provide any further explanation that may be sought.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio
Seconded: Mayor Rhys Williams

That the Minutes of the Finance and Services Committee meeting held on 17 April 2024 be endorsed.

RESOLUTION 031.2/2024

CARRIED

7.7 LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOUSE TRUST BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MINUTES –27 MARCH 2024 AND 17 APRIL 2024

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Minutes of the Local Government House Trust Board of Management meetings held on 27 March and 17 April 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Local Government House Trust (LGHT) Board of Management met on 27 March and 17 April 2024.
- The Minutes have been distributed to members of State Council under separate cover.

ATTACHMENTS – CONFIDENTIAL

- LGHT Board of Management Minutes – 27 March 2024
- Attachments to Minutes:
 - Business Case for Qube Buyout 2024
 - Term Sheet Review by EY
- LGHT Board of Management Minutes – 17 April 2024
- Attachments to Minutes:
 - Profit and Loss Statement as at 31 March 2024
 - Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

BACKGROUND

The LGHT board of management met on 27 March 2024.

The Minutes of the meeting, together with attachments, have been distributed to members of State Council under separate cover.

COMMENT

The main items of discussion and determination for the LGHT Board of Management were concerning the One70 Buyout.

LGHT members will be in attendance at the State Council meeting to respond to questions and provide any further explanation that may be sought.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Phil Blight
Seconded: President Cr Les Price

That State Council note the Minutes of the Local Government House Trust Board of Management meetings held on 27 March and 17 April 2024.

RESOLUTION 032.2/2024

CARRIED

7.8 SELECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES – 16 APRIL 2024 AND 17 APRIL 2024

By Chantelle O'Brien, Governance Support Officer

Cr John Daw declared an interest in this item and left the meeting at 1.49pm.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. the resolution contained in the 16 April 2024 Selection Committee Minutes be noted; and**
- 2. the recommendations contained in the 16 April 2024 Selection Committee Minutes and 17 April 2024 Selection Committee Special Meeting Minutes be endorsed.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Selection Committee recently met for their scheduled ordinary meeting on 16 April 2024 to consider nominees for the following Committees:
 - Public Library Working Group
 - Control of Vehicles (Off Road Areas) Act Advisory Committee
 - Local Government Advisory Board
 - Local Government Grants Commission
- The Committee met again the following day (17 April) to reconsider a decision from the previous meeting after a discrepancy was identified. The Committee resolved to rescind the original decision relating to the Local Government Advisory Board.

ATTACHMENTS – CONFIDENTIAL

- Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – 16 April 2024
- Special Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – 17 April 2024

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

The Selection Committee had an Ordinary Meeting on 16 April 2024 to consider nominees for the following Committees.

Public Library Working Group

No nominations were received for this vacancy and the Committee resolved for the vacancy to be readvertised.

Control of Vehicles (Off Road Areas) Act Advisory Committee

No nominations were received for the Deputy vacancy and the Selection Committee have recommended that this vacancy also be readvertised.

Local Government Advisory Board

Five nominations were received for this vacancy including outgoing members that have renominated. A panel of nine names was requested by the Minister. At the meeting on 16 April, the Committee recommended to put forward all five names to the Minister.

Due to a discrepancy in the number of Member vacancies for the Local Government Advisory Board which should have read two Member and two Deputy Member vacancies with a panel of nine names requested (rather than one Member and one Deputy Member as shown in the 16 April Agenda), the Selection Committee held a Special Meeting on 17 April to reconsider their recommendation.

The Selection Committee determined to rescind their original recommendation for the Local Government Advisory Board and have recommended that the vacancies be readvertised to allow for more nominees to be submitted and provide as close to a panel of nine names where possible.

Local Government Grants Commission

Nominations were sought for Metropolitan Member and Deputy as well as Country Rural Member and Deputy member. Two nominations were received for Metropolitan, and seven nominations received for Country Rural Member. Outgoing members have also re nominated for these vacancies.

The Selection Committee have recommended that the Metropolitan vacancy be re advertised and the seven nominees for Country Rural be submitted to the Minister for consideration.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Paul Kelly
Seconded: President Cr Les Price

That:

- 1. the resolution contained in the 16 April 2024 Selection Committee Minutes be noted; and**
- 2. the recommendations contained in the 16 April 2024 Selection Committee Minutes and 17 April 2024 Selection Committee Special Meeting Minutes be endorsed.**

RESOLUTION 033.2/2024

CARRIED

Cr John Daw returned to the meeting at 1.51pm.

8 POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1 ENVIRONMENT POLICY TEAM REPORT

Presented by Policy Team Chair, Cr Les Price

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the matters considered by the Environment Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

The Environment Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

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

This Report provides an update on matters considered by the Environment Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Nil

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

Nil

3. PORTFOLIO UPDATES

The Policy Team was provided with updates on:

- Urban Forests
 - The release of WALGA's model Tree Retention Local Planning Policy (LPP);
 - Round One of the Local Government Urban Greening Grant Program; and
 - The State Government's announcement of the development of a Perth and Peel Urban Forest Strategy.
- Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer;
- The State Government's consideration of the Report of the Independent Panel's Review of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*;
- Local Government planning fees and charges – the Minister for Planning; Lands; Housing; Homelessness has agreed to a comprehensive review; and
- Native vegetation clearing permit assessment timeframes.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	Not considered
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Les Price
Seconded: Cr Kerry Smyth

That State Council note the matters considered by the Environment Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

RESOLUTION 034.2/2024

CARRIED

8.2 GOVERNANCE POLICY TEAM REPORT

Presented by Policy Team Chair, Mayor Patrick Hall

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report on the Governance Policy Team.

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*

The Governance Policy Team have not held a meeting since the last State Council meeting in March.

A meeting of the Governance Policy Team will be scheduled to occur in May, where the following key items of business will be presented:

- Standardised Meeting Procedures Submission
- Elections Review Report

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	Not considered
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Patrick Hall
Seconded: President Chris Antonio

That State Council note the report on the Governance Policy Team.

RESOLUTION 035.2/2024

CARRIED

8.3 INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY TEAM REPORT

Presented by Policy Team Chair, Cr Stephen Strange

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the matters considered by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

The Infrastructure Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

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

This Report provides an update on matters considered by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Nil

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

The Policy Team noted the Zone Resolutions and Composite resolution for the item on the 6 March 2024 State Council agenda for decision – Separation and Edge Line Markings by Local Government on Low Volume Rural Roads.

The Policy Team progressed actions and advocacy in relation to:

- Regulating heavy vehicle road access conditions; Extended lead time for quotes from Western Power for headworks and changes to infrastructure;
- Royalty payments for mine site materials used in road construction and maintenance;
- Regional Telecommunication Independent Review;
- Review of Main Road Cross over Policy;
- Required changes to the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements; and
- Local Government Active Transport Working Group

The team noted that ALGA has accepted the invitation to hold the National Local Roads, Transport and Infrastructure Congress in Western Australia in December 2024.

3. PORTFOLIO UPDATES

The Policy Team was provided with a presentation on the areas of focus for the Infrastructure portfolio.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	Not considered
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Stephen Strange
Seconded: Cr Karen Wheatland

That State Council note the matters considered by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

RESOLUTION 036.2/2024

CARRIED

8.4 PEOPLE AND PLACE POLICY TEAM REPORT

Presented by Policy Team Chair, President Cr Phillip Blight

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the matters considered by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

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

- *Community*
- *Emergency Management*

This Report provides an update on matters considered by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL DECISION

Nil

2. MATTERS FOR STATE COUNCIL NOTING

The Policy Team discussed the following items for noting on the 6 March 2024 State Council agenda:

- 2024-25 Federal Budget Submission; and
- Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) Local Government Consultation Project.

3. MATTERS REFERRED BY ZONES

Murchison Country Zone: Improving the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS)

At the People and Place Policy Team Meeting on 7 February 2024, the Policy Team considered the following resolution of the Murchison Country Zone:

That WALGA advocate for improvements to the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) for regional Western Australia particularly around fuel and accommodation subsidies.

The People and Place Policy Team resolved to:

1. Note the request from the Murchison Country Zone.
2. Request that WALGA write to the Minister for Health to seek a review of the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme.

At the People and Place Policy Team Meeting on 6 March 2024, the Policy Team amended the recommendation to:

1. Note the request from the Murchison Country Zone.
2. Request that WALGA write to the Minister for Health to seek a review of the current level of the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme *with the intention to increase it to reflect current costs, including an annual CPI increase.*

South East Metropolitan Zone: Mitigating public health implications of increasing temperatures, frequent heatwaves coupled with accelerated depletion of tree canopy.
East Metropolitan Zone: Public health planning for climate change (heat) risks

The People and Place Policy team considered the following resolutions of the East and South East Metropolitan Zones:

The South East Metropolitan Zone is seeking WALGA:

- *Develop Model Text Provisions for the sector to address increasing risks to community public health generated by escalating heat wave conditions and Urban Heat Island effects coupled with accelerated loss of tree canopy; and*
- *As a matter of urgency, advocates to the state government to establish additional funding to enable local governments to implement intensive, widespread measures to mitigate the major public health implications of increasing temperatures, frequent heatwaves coupled with accelerated depletion of tree canopy, particularly in urban areas.*

The East Metropolitan Zone is seeking WALGA:

- *Develop draft model actions to guide Public Health Plans to address increasing risks to community public health generated by escalating heat wave conditions and Urban Heat Island effects coupled with accelerated loss of tree canopy; and*
- *As a matter of urgency, advocates to the state government to establish additional funding to enable local governments to implement intensive, widespread measures to mitigate the major public health implications of increasing temperatures, frequent heatwaves coupled with accelerated depletion of tree canopy, particularly in urban areas.*

The People and Place Policy Team resolved:

1. To note the resolutions of the South East and the East Metropolitan Zones.
2. The ongoing WALGA advocacy regarding the implementation of Stage 5 of the Public Health Act 2016, as stated in Advocacy Position 3.2.1.
3. That WALGA will continue to advocate for sector support, advice and funding for Public Health Plan drafting and implementation.

Gascoyne Zone: Challenges with Aboriginal Heritage Matters

The People and Place Policy Team was provided with an update on action arising from the resolution of the Gascoyne Country Zone:

That the Gascoyne Country Zone requests that WALGA schedules a Teams meeting between the Gascoyne Zone delegates and the relevant Policy Team to discuss the issues the Zone faces in complying with Aboriginal Heritage Legislation and establishing indigenous Land Use Agreements.

On 22 February 2024, WALGA convened an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Roundtable for the Gascoyne Zone in Carnarvon. The aim of the roundtable was to gain a shared understanding of the requirements under the amended *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and its interaction with heritage surveys, Standard Heritage Agreements, and Indigenous Land Use Agreements; and to share Local Government feedback and progress implementation solutions applicable across the Local Government Sector in partnership with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). The discussion provided some practical solutions and proposals which WALGA is seeking to progress with DPLH, aligned to the State Government's commitment to guidance and support for the sector.

President Eddie Smith hosted the Roundtable in Carnarvon and informed the Policy Team that it was very informative and worthwhile. The People and Place Policy Team resolved to encourage zones that are inclined to host a roundtable on the Aboriginal Heritage Act with involvement from DWER and DPLH.

4. PORTFOLIO UPDATE

The Policy Team was provided with updates on the:

- WALGA Emergency Management Survey;
- Power and Telecommunications Roundtable held on 20 February; and
- LEMA Improvement Project.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	Not considered
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Phil Blight
Seconded: Cr Scott Crosby

That State Council note the matters considered by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting on 6 March 2024.

RESOLUTION 037.2/2024

CARRIED

8.5 MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL (MWAC) REPORT

Presented by Deputy Chair, Cr Karen Wheatland

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the resolutions of the 21 February 2024 Municipal Waste Advisory Council Meeting.

This Report provides an update on matters considered by the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) at its meeting held on 21 February 2024.

1. MATTERS FOR DECISION

Waste Levy Advocacy Position

MWAC resolved to rescind the existing Waste Levy Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.4 Waste Management Funding and endorse a new Waste Levy Advocacy Position (State Council [Item 7.1](#) for Decision refers).

Waste Levy Advocacy Position

MWAC, through WALGA, resolved to write to the Minister for Energy; Environment and Climate Action:

- Expressing Local Governments' concern about the impacts of the e-waste to landfill ban regarding the e-waste to Landfill Band the need for further funding and effective product stewardship in line with WALGA's advocacy position on [Landfill Bans](#); and
- Seeking an update on the outcomes of the consultation on the Container Deposit Scheme expansion, timeframe for the expansion and reiterating Local Governments' strong support for the expansion of the Scheme to include wine and spirit bottles as a minimum.

2. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

MWAC considered *Waste Advocacy Priorities for 2024*:

- Increase the proportion of the Waste Levy being provided to Local Government to assist the sector in meeting the State Waste Strategy targets and provide investment certainty;
- Achieve regulatory certainty through provision of the Waste Derived Materials Framework, new DWER Regulatory Framework in place providing a risk-based approach to regulation, and the completion of the WARR Strategy Review and revised State Waste Strategy;
- Ensure the State Waste Infrastructure Plan is fit for purpose across WA, with a specific focus on ensuring sufficient regional infrastructure;
- The implementation of effective product stewardship schemes for electrical and electronic waste, packaging, tyres and mattresses which address WALGA's 10 Principles for Product Stewardship.
- Development of a WALGA Circular Economy Policy Position; and
- Research and engagement with Local Government on key issues with asbestos, including illegal dumping, Local Government infrastructure, emergency management and community need to identify priority action areas and funding required.

MWAC also discussed the importance of ensuring high quality services were in place and ensuring different community needs were met, particularly for CALD communities and different types of development (e.g. multi-residential vs single unit dwellings).

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	Not considered
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Karen Wheatland
Seconded: Cr Jacqui Huntley

That State Council note the resolutions of the 21 February 2024 Municipal Waste Advisory Council Meeting.

RESOLUTION 038.2/2024

CARRIED

9 MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION

9.1 WALGA 2023 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

By Rachel Armstrong, A/Policy Manager, Emergency Management

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the results of the 2023 Local Government Emergency Management Survey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 102 (75%) of the 137 mainland WA Local Governments responded to WALGA's 2023 Emergency Management Survey.
- Key issues raised by Local Governments included: community preparedness and resilience; capacity to respond to and manage recovery; management of Bush Fire Brigades; inadequate LGGS funding; lack of emergency management resources; and challenges accessing grant funding.
- The survey demonstrates the importance of Community Emergency Services Managers (CESMs) to Local Governments that have one and that many regional Local Governments without a CESM would like one.
- The survey identified several issues with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* that Local Governments would like to see resolved in the proposed Consolidated Emergency Services Legislation.
- The survey results will inform WALGA's policy development and advocacy on behalf of the sector, including the WALGA 2024-25 State Budget Submission, and in the lead up to the next State and Federal elections.
- A summary of the survey results was presented at the State Council Information Forum on 3 April, and in a Sector webinar was held on 11 April 2024.

ATTACHMENT

- [Executive Summary – WALGA 2023 Emergency Management Survey](#)

BACKGROUND

WALGA undertakes a Local Government Emergency Management Survey every two years, with previous surveys undertaken in 2019 and 2021.

In 2019, WALGA undertook the 'Before, During, After' Local Government Emergency Management Survey. Actions undertaken as a result of the survey feedback included the establishment of a Local Government Emergency Management Network, and development of a new 'Emergency Management for Local Government Leaders' training course.

The 2021 survey built on the feedback received in the 2019 Survey with a specific focus on managing volunteer Bush Fire Brigades. The results provided the basis for a review of [WALGA's Emergency Management Advocacy Positions](#) and have enabled WALGA to effectively represent the Local Government sector's interests, including through:

- The State Emergency Management Committee, State Bushfire Advisory Committee, Inter- Agency Bushfire Operations Committee; and

- Representations to Government and policy submissions, including the 2023-24 and 2024-25 WALGA State Budget Submissions.

102 (75%) of the 137 mainland WA Local Governments responded to WALGA's 2023 Emergency Management Survey, which was conducted from 6 November and 8 December 2023.

COMMENT

Key issues raised by Local Governments in responding to the 2023 Survey included: community preparedness and resilience; capacity to respond to and manage recovery; management of Bush Fire Brigades; inadequate LGGS funding; lack of emergency management resources; and challenges accessing grant funding.

The survey demonstrates the importance of Community Emergency Services Managers (CESMs) to Local Governments that have one and that many regional Local Governments without a CESM would like one. The survey also identified several issues with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* that Local Governments would like to see resolved in the proposed Consolidated Emergency Services Legislation.

The 2023 Survey results provide critical information to underpin WALGA's Emergency Management policy and advocacy work. The results will inform WALGA's policy development and advocacy on behalf of the sector, supporting the [WALGA 2024-25 State Budget Submission](#), and in the lead up to the 2025 State and Federal elections. Key focus areas include the need for adequate resourcing for Local Government Emergency Management, increased support for volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Service (SES) through the Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS) and ensuring matters important to Local Government are considered in the development of the Consolidated Emergency Services Act.

Supporting material will be prepared to summarise and communicate key information to Local Governments, State and Federal Government and other stakeholders.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio
Seconded: Mayor Rhys Williams

That State Council note the results of the 2023 Local Government Emergency Management Survey.

RESOLUTION 039.2/2024

CARRIED

9.2 TREE RETENTION MODEL LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

By Coralie Claudio, Senior Policy Advisor, Planning

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Tree Retention Model Local Planning Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's model Tree Retention Local Planning Policy (LPP) was released in March 2024.
- The LPP aims to create a consistent regulatory framework for tree protection across WA.
- The LPP stipulates the circumstances in which a development approval is required to remove a tree and guides the assessment of these applications and other planning proposals.

ATTACHMENT

- [Model Local Planning Policy: Tree Retention](#)
- [Letter from the WALGA President to the Minister for Planning; Lands; Housing; Homelessness](#)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA Advocacy Position **4.6 Urban Forest:**

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

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

- iv. *consideration of public realm design to maximise opportunities for tree retention and new planting consistent with any tree canopy targets.*
4. *Work with Local Government and other stakeholders to increase community awareness and promote behaviour change in relation to urban forest growth and retention to support State and Local Government targets and action.*

BACKGROUND

The current State planning framework is largely silent on regulatory and policy mechanisms that can be used to retain trees on private land. Local Governments have sought to address this void through different statutory mechanisms, namely local planning policy or local planning scheme provisions. Proposed changes to local planning schemes by Local Governments to include tree protection provisions on private land within have been rejected by the Minister for Planning.

In 2023, WALGA prepared an *Issues Paper: Local Government Approaches to Tree Retention* (Issues Paper) which outlined the key challenges for Local Government in retaining trees on private land and street trees. Legal advice on the questions posed in the Issues Paper was procured from McLeods Barristers and Solicitors, who produced the *Legal Response to the Local Government Approaches to Tree Retention* (2023). The legal advice was purchased by approximately 50 Local Governments.

Key findings from the legal advice include:

- The removal of a tree is an activity that falls within the concept of 'works';
- Whether or not the works involved in removing a tree amount to a development that requires approval is a matter of fact and degree and is therefore inherently uncertain; and
- To remove uncertainty, it would be preferable for the planning framework to stipulate the circumstances in which approval is required to remove a tree. This can be done via scheme or policy provisions.

The development of a model LPP in response to the legal advice was identified by the Urban Forest Working Group (UFWG) as a high priority. The model LPP has been developed by WALGA, in consultation with the UFWG, and reviewed by McLeods.

The model LPP:

- Clarifies that the tree removal (or other tree damaging activity) is works that requires development approval;
- Introduces and defines the term 'regulated tree' being a living tree that:
 - Is 8 metres or more high, and/or
 - Has an average canopy diameter of at least 6 metres,
 - Has a trunk circumference of at least 1.5 metres, measured 1.4 metres above the ground, and
 - is of a species that is not included on State or local area weed register;
- Lists the circumstances where tree damaging activity would be exempt from requiring a development approval (i.e. tree does not meet the definition of regulated tree); and
- Promotes and facilitates tree preservation at all stages of the planning and development process, including strategic planning proposals and subdivision applications, as well as development applications.

The model LPP was [released](#) in March 2024.

COMMENT

Local Governments can adopt the LPP in accordance with the procedures set out in the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Regulations 2015*, which requires community consultation and consideration by Council.

The provisions of the model LPP can be modified to respond specific Local Government context or community feedback. WALGA is recommending that Local Governments seek to minimise changes, particularly in relation to the definition of regulated tree and when a development application is required for tree damaging activity, to promote consistency in approach and reduce uncertainty for decision makers, proponents, and communities.

The model LPP has been well received by the sector with a number of Local Governments investigating the use of, or preparing to implement, the policy.

WALGA briefed the Minister for Planning on the model LPP prior to its release and provided him with a copy on its release. The WALGA President has also promoted the LPP during media interviews with ABC Radio and 6PR.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio
Seconded: Mayor Rhys Williams

That State Council note the Tree Retention Model Local Planning Policy.

RESOLUTION 039.2/2024

CARRIED

9.3 LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS (LEMA) IMPROVEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

By Simone Ruane, Project Lead, Emergency Management

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Local Emergency Management Arrangement Improvement Project update.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In December 2023, the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) endorsed a Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan, including funding to deliver the first phase of the Plan.
- The LEMA Improvement Plan aims to progress the local emergency management reforms recommended by Local Governments in the LEMA Review and will be delivered as a partnership between WALGA and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES).
- WALGA has been allocated \$356,000 to employ a LEMA Project Lead to work directly with Local Governments to develop and pilot new LEMA approaches over an 18-month period.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Advocacy Position **8.11 Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA):**

1. *The State Government should fund the implementation of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).*
2. *A reformed LEMA system should:*
 - a. *Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of Local Governments in emergency management;*
 - b. *Simplify the reporting processes and reduce the administrative burden of maintaining compliance;*
 - c. *Provide a suite of scalable tools and guidance materials that are accessible through an online knowledge hub;*
 - d. *Build the emergency management capacity and capability of Local Governments through the provision of targeted training, exercising support, human resources and sustainable funding;*
 - e. *Assist Local Governments to continue to deliver their core business activities and provide public information during an emergency event;*
 - f. *Improve the connectivity of Local Governments' various risk management and hazard planning processes through an integrated approach; and*
 - g. *Enable resource sharing and collaboration across the Local Government sector.*

BACKGROUND

Under the *Emergency Management Act 2005* WA Local Governments are required to establish one or more Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) and maintain Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) for their district. LEMA refers to the suite of emergency management documentation, systems, processes, agreements, and memorandums of understanding (MOU) that support a coordinated approach to EM at the local level.

Recognising the need for a more contemporary and fit-for-purpose local emergency management system, in 2019 the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) approved a review of the current LEMA model to identify the key issues and opportunities for improvement. In 2021, WALGA was allocated [AWARE Funding](#) to lead a Local Government consultation for the LEMA Review to ensure a sector-informed approach.

From April to December 2022, WALGA consulted with 100 Western Australian Local Governments to inform the LEMA Review. The resulting [LEMA Review Consultation with Western Australian Local Governments: Project Summary and Recommendations Report](#) laid the groundwork for a comprehensive [LEMA Improvement Plan and a five-year implementation approach](#). The Plan aims to reduce administrative burden and build the knowledge and capability of Local Governments in developing and maintaining fit-for-purpose LEMA. The SEMC approved the Plan and funding from the State Level Project Fund to deliver Phase 1 of the LEMA Improvement Plan in December 2023.

Phase 1 will be delivered as a partnership project between WALGA and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) on behalf of the SEMC. WALGA has been allocated \$356,000 to employ a LEMA Project Lead to work directly with Local Governments to co-develop and pilot new LEMA approaches and supporting resources over an 18-month period.

COMMENT

The initiation of the LEMA Improvement Program demonstrates the commitment of the State Government to progress LEMA reforms. However, as outlined in WALGA's [2024-2025 Budget Submission](#), funding of \$1 million per year over 5 years is needed to implement the full LEMA Improvement Plan. WALGA's submission also requests \$9 million per annum for a Local Government Emergency Management Program to build the capacity of Local Governments to maintain effective LEMA and sustain improvements over the longer term.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio
Seconded: Mayor Rhys Williams

That State Council note the Local Emergency Management Arrangement Improvement Project update.

RESOLUTION 039.2/2024

CARRIED

9.4 PLANNING AND BUILDING PERFORMANCE MONITORING PROJECT

By Chris Hossen, Policy Manager, Planning and Building

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the results of the 2022-23 Local Government Performance Monitoring Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA's Local Government Performance Monitoring Project has been undertaken annually since 2017.
- WALGA uses the findings of the project to support advocacy and policy development, particularly around planning and building regulation reform.
- 42 Local Governments participated in the 2022-23 Project, representing approximately 90% of Western Australia's population and 94% of the State's total population growth between 2021 and 2022.
- The 2022-23 data shows that Local Governments have maintained high levels of performance in undertaking their strategic and statutory planning and building functions.
- The findings of the Project are incorporated into an online interactive dashboard publicly available through the WALGA website.

ATTACHMENT

- [Key Indicator Snapshot](#)
- [Performance Monitoring Dashboard](#)

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Performance Monitoring Project* (the Project) and associated *Local Government Performance Monitoring Report* (the Report) was initiated by the Growth Alliance Perth and Peel (GAPP) group and WALGA in 2017, in response to inaccurate and misleading reporting of the planning performance metropolitan Local Governments by Property Council WA.

The Project and accompanying Report have been undertaken annually since that time, with the number of participating Local Governments increasing from 11 to 43 in 2022-23. The process of collecting and reporting data has also been refined and improved. The Performance Monitoring Dashboard, now in its third year, provides a collated view of all participating Local Governments across the seven years of Project reporting, and allows Local Governments to analyse and compare performance by year, region or against individual Local Governments. The use of the dashboard reduces project costs and reporting times and allows for a faster expansion of the project.

The dashboard is not intended to be a comparison of individual Local Government performance; however it allows individual Local Governments to draw comparisons between themselves and other Local Governments, which may be useful for those who may have similar development pressures and resourcing.

COMMENT

42 Local Governments now participate in the project:

Albany	Armadale	Augusta-Margaret River
Bassendean	Bayswater	Belmont
Broome	Bunbury	Busselton
Cambridge	Canning	Cockburn
Denmark	East Fremantle	Fremantle
Gosnells	Greater Geraldton	Harvey
Joondalup	Kalamunda	Karratha
Kwinana	Mandurah	Manjimup
Melville	Mosman Park	Mundaring
Nannup	Nedlands	Northam
Perth	Port Hedland	Rockingham
Serpentine Jarrahdale	South Perth	Stirling
Subiaco	Swan	Toodyay
Victoria Park	Vincent	Wanneroo

These Local Governments represent approximately 90% of Western Australia's population and 94% of the state's total population growth between 2021 and 2022. Collectively they provide a strong indication of how the Local Government sector in Western Australia is performing in the areas of strategic and statutory planning and building regulation. There is low standard deviation within most specific measures, and average sector performance year on year is consistent, this indicated a high degree of confidence that the reported performance is reflective of the sector as a whole, and that high levels of performance by some larger Local Governments are not impacting sector averages.

Key findings from the 2022-23 data:

- Participating Local Governments determined 55,598 applications (development applications, subdivision referrals and building permits), a 16% decrease on the previous year;
- 92% of these applications were determined or responded to within statutory timeframes;
- 99% of all development applications were approved;
- 97% of all development applications were determined under delegated authority;
- 22 Local Governments are currently reviewing their Local Planning Scheme (LPS);
- Local Governments continue to be concerned at the length of time taken to receive consent to advertise and final endorsement for LPSs; and
- For scheme amendments:
 - Local Governments finalised 64 scheme amendments in 2022-2023,
 - 60% of the time taken to complete scheme amendments could be attributed to State Government processes, significantly higher than the 49.5% average over the 7 years of reporting.

WALGA uses the findings of the project to support advocacy and policy development, particularly around planning and building regulation reform and to reinforce the critical role of Local Government in the planning system. WALGA will continue to utilise this information to inform policy development, advice and advocacy in relation to any legislation, policy or regulations prepared by the State which affect the planning and building functions of Local Government.

WALGA is encouraging additional Local Governments to participate in the 2023-24 financial year reporting period, with a focus on the remaining metropolitan and peri-urban Local Governments.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Eastern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Great Southern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Kimberley Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Murchison Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
North Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio

Seconded: Mayor Rhys Williams

That State Council note the results of the 2022-23 Local Government Performance Monitoring Project.

RESOLUTION 039.2/2024

CARRIED

9.5 2024 WALGA ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT FORUM

By Hannah Godsave, Acting Manager, Community Policy and Michelle Dayman, Senior Advisor Events

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report on the 2024 Aboriginal Engagement Forum.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum was held on 20 March 2024 at the State Reception Centre in Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park).

The Forum provides an opportunity for the WA Local Government sector and partners to embrace the principles of reconciliation, through respectful Aboriginal and community engagement.

Feedback from speakers, attendees, WALGA Executive and State Councillors has been overwhelmingly positive, with 93 per cent of survey respondents saying they would attend future Forums.

BACKGROUND

WALGA has delivered Aboriginal Engagement Forums (the Forum) since 2017. The Forums provide an opportunity for the WA Local Government sector and partners to embrace the principles of reconciliation - to listen, learn and share with a collective goal of creating positive outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples and the wider community. The Forums aim to build capacity to achieve better practice policy, programs, and service delivery in Local Government.

The 2024 theme 'Djinaning Koora Djinaning Boorda' (Looking Back to Move Forward) acknowledged that our shared path to reconciliation is not straight forward but through reflection, sharing experiences, innovation, and collaboration we can inspire each other and move forward. The morning session, Djinaning Koora (Looking Back) centered around the understanding that without acknowledging our past and its impact, we are unable to move forward to achieve true reconciliation. The afternoon session, Djinaning Boorda (Moving Forward) celebrated the role Local Government plays in driving local level reconciliation. The [news article](#) on the Forum provides further reflections on the program.

187 delegates that attended the Forum, including:

- 34% identifying as Aboriginal;
- 108 from Local Government, including 17 Elected Members, representing 43 Local Governments across 13 WALGA Zones; and
- representatives from the not-for-profit sector, Aboriginal Organisations, State Government agencies and other businesses.

The Forum was facilitated by Ballardong Noongar woman Roanna Edwards as Master of Ceremonies. The program included presentations from Cr Yvonne Weldon from the City of Sydney, Carol Innes, Co-Director of Danjoo Koorliny, and representatives from Local Governments and Aboriginal organisations. The afternoon panels showcased a diverse mix of projects by Local Governments from across the State. Increased Aboriginal representation was evident, with First Nation presenters in all sessions.

The production of the event was elevated to align with the WALGA rebranding and create an event 'look and feel' consistent with the Forum's aim of providing space to share and learn. The planning of the event was supported by a Reference Group for cultural guidance that included State Councillors, Cr Barry Winmar and Cr Helen Sadler as well as Deborah Wilkes, Deputy CEO at the Shire of Shark Bay and Local Government officers.

COMMENT

Ticket sales for the 2024 Forum were lower than expected, despite a managed and targeted marketing campaign. While it is difficult to precisely identify the reasons for the lower attendance, this has also been the recent experience of other organisations holding events in this space and has been attributed to an unease and uncertainty about engaging in the Aboriginal policy space post the Voice Referendum.

Feedback on the Forum from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, with 93 per cent of survey respondents saying they would attend future Forums. Frequent comments along the lines of "best Forum to date" reflect the concerted effort to elevate both the production and programming of the event and the collaboration between the WALGA Policy and Advocacy teams, Elected Member representatives and Local Government officials via the Reference Group and other channels.

ZONE CONSIDERATION

Avon Midland Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Central Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Gascoyne Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
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Northern Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Peel Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
Pilbara Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South East Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South Metropolitan Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.
South West Country Zone	WALGA recommendation noted.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio
Seconded: Mayor Rhys Williams

That State Council note the report on the 2024 Aboriginal Engagement Forum.

RESOLUTION 039.2/2024

CARRIED

10 ORGANISATION REPORTS

10.1 KEY ACTIVITY REPORTS

10.1.1 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, ADVOCACY PORTFOLIO

By Rachel Horton, Executive Manager Advocacy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Advocacy Portfolio to the 1 May 2024 State Council meeting.

The Advocacy Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Marketing*
- *Communications*
- *Media*
- *Government Relations*
- *Events*

The following outlines the activities of the Advocacy Portfolio since the 6 March 2024 State Council meeting.

1. MARKETING

The new WALGA website will be launched on 9 April 2024, following final testing throughout March. This will also mark the official launch of the new brand, with only the new logo and brand assets being utilised from this date onwards. Communications have been drafted along with a promotional video to announce the launch to the external audience. Internal communications and activations have also been planned to ensure employees are up-to-date and equipped with knowledge around the correct use of the brand.

The Executive Manager, Advocacy participated in an ALGA working group to develop a National Federal Election Campaign. Discussions included identifying election asks, campaign goals, sector participation, resourcing and campaign themes.

Following the State Council Election Priorities workshop in March 2024, WALGA has also begun work on a State Election Campaign, including developing the strategic approach, determining the key asks and theme.

The Marketing team is developing campaigns to promote WALGA training courses to Member Councils including the Certificate III in Local Government, Diploma of Local Government (for Elected Members) and Health and Safety Representative courses.

2. COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

Media Coverage

Media monitoring recorded 269 mentions of “WALGA” and “Local Government” in mainstream media throughout the reporting period.

The top three media outlets were 6PR Perth (80 mentions), The West Australian (30) and ABC Radio Perth (29).

The top stories covered were urban canopy and greening, state funding of Local Government libraries, bushfire management, ARENA funding for electric vehicles, reforms to R-codes and granny flat compatibility. Stories that gained the most momentum were WALGA’s response to planning reforms and granny flats, and the WALGA State Budget submission on Renewing our Libraries.

Throughout February and March President Karen Chappel was mentioned 55 times in mainstream media. In addition to being interviewed for Channel 9 on urban greening, the President was interviewed for print, radio and online publications on the above topics, plus on her re-election as WALGA President.

(Source: MyMedia)

Press Releases

WALGA Communications published four Media Releases:

- Local Governments taking the lead to protect mature trees on private land (5 March, 2024)
- It’s Electrifying! WALGA welcomes funding support for Councils to shift to EVs in WA (7 March 2024)
- WALGA President Karen Chappel re-elected for second term (7 March 2024)
- WALGA says no to dongas in backyards (13 March 2024)

Other communications published:

- 8 weekly LG Direct newsletters to over 2,000 Elected Members and senior staff.
- The hard copy version of the 2024 Local Government Directory has been sent to print and will be distributed in April 2024.

Social Media Engagement

In general, Instagram and LinkedIn have seen growth in reach and engagement whilst Facebook has seen a decline. The Marketing Team will plot the statistics month-on-month to identify which stories are gaining most traction and whether engagement is moving to different platforms.

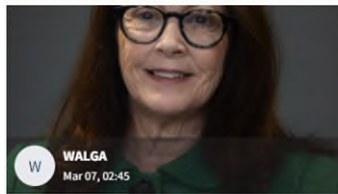
Trends are compared to the previous reporting period of 1 December 2023 – 31 January 2024.

LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram combined statistics

- 39,822 page and profile reach
- 71,025 page and profile impressions
- 61 posts (11.6% decrease)
- 98 post comments and replies (60.7% increase)
- 1,167 post reactions and likes (33.3% decrease)
- Average post engagement rate of 7.45% (32.9% increase)
- 1,084 video views (63.3% decrease)

Facebook Top Posts

Top posts



Shire of Morawa President Karen Chappel AM JP has been re-elected as President of the WA Local Government Association, for her second term. Elected at the State Council meeting yesterday. Councillor Chappel



Local Governments taking the lead to protect mature trees on private land WALGA has today released a new Model Local Planning Policy (LPP) to support Local Governments to stem the loss in tree canopy cover in



WALGA President Cr Karen Chappel AM JP met with the Hon. John Carey, the Minister for Planning; Lands; Housing and Homelessness today to discuss the recently announced Perth and Peel Greening Strategy and the

- 12,208 post reach (23.4% decrease)
- 13,033 post impressions (23.4% decrease)
- 5.27% post engagement rate (2.5% decrease)

Instagram Top Posts

Top posts



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



Local Governments throughout the Perth and Peel regions will share in \$591,839.32 worth of funding under the first round of the Urban Greening Grants Program. "This is a terrific start to the Urban Greening Grants



On Tuesday March 5 Team WALGA cleaned up Railway Parade (home of the WALGA office), collecting 31kg of waste and 53 beverage containers! WALGA is part of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council's Adopt a Spot Program

- 2,394 post reach (31.6% increase)
- 2,418 post impressions (25.8% increase)
- 7.55% post engagement rate (77.1% increase)

LinkedIn Top Posts

Top posts



From today, Local Governments throughout the Perth and Peel regions will share in \$591,839.32 worth of funding under the first round of the Urban Greening Grants Program. "This is a terrific start to the Urban



As Western Australia experiences a brutal 3-day heatwave, we are reminded we need Cooler Cities and Shadler Suburbs. We need more tree canopy. In WA we are losing trees and at a rate faster than we can replace



WALGA President Karen Chappel re-elected for second term Shire of Morawa President Karen Chappel AM JP has been re-elected as President of the WA Local Government Association, for her second term. Elected at

- 1,700 post reactions (11.1% increase)
- 86,482 post impressions (6.5% increase)
- 7.39% post engagement rate (13.6% increase)

LinkedIn Advocacy related posts

- [8 February – State Budget Submission - Cooler Cities, Shadier Suburbs](#)
- [9 February – State Budget Submission - Renew Our Libraries](#)
- 14 February – State Budget Submission - Library Lovers Day, repost from Australian Bureau of Statistics (no link available)
- [28 February – State Budget Submission - President Chappel and CEO Nick Sloan Canberra meetings](#)
- [1 March – Meeting with Hon. John Carey to discuss the recently announced Perth and Peel Greening Strategy and the importance of growing our tree canopy to mitigate the impacts of climate change](#)
- [6 March - WALGA Model Local Planning Policy \(LPP\) Tree Retention](#)
- [14 March – WALGA says no to dongas in backyards](#)
- [19 March – Urban Greening grants recipients, with mention of State Budget Submission ask](#)
- [22 March – State Budget Submission - Ride to School Day](#)
- [25 March – State Budget Submission - CSRFF funding ask](#)

3. EVENTS

WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum

The 2024 WALGA Aboriginal Engagement Forum was held on 20 March 2024 at the State Reception Centre in Kaarta Gar-up (see [Item 9.5](#)).

Launch of 2024 WA Tree Festival

On Wednesday 27 March 2024, WALGA collaborated with the Kings Park and Botanic Garden to launch the WA Tree Festival (Tree Fest) for 2024 at Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park).

Local Government Officers, Mayors and Presidents, CEOs, stakeholders, and the WA Tree Festival Steering Committee enjoyed an address from the Director of the Western Australian Botanic Garden Sue McDougall and renowned WA media personality and long-time host of The Garden Gurus, Trevor Cochrane.

It was a great opportunity to celebrate the many Local Governments and community groups involved in this year's festival and come together to highlight that we all have a vital role to play in protecting and enhancing our natural environment.

This is the first time WALGA has assisted in the launch of the event, which has strong links to both our work in delivering the Urban Greening Grant Program, and our State Budget Submission ask of \$20 million between 2024-25 to expand the Urban Greening Grant Program and \$1million for the creation of a State-Wide Urban Forest Strategy.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Logan Howlett JP
Seconded: President Chris Antonio

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Advocacy Portfolio to the 1 May 2024 State Council meeting.

RESOLUTION 040.2/2024

CARRIED

10.1.2 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager Infrastructure

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Infrastructure Portfolio for May 2024.

The Infrastructure Portfolio comprises the following work units:

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

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

1. ROADS

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

Three projects have been completed and a further four are progressing. Two workshops were recently held to seek project proposals for future works. The team is also seeking Local Government volunteers to serve on the Operations Team that will prioritise projects and to serve as project leaders.

Condition Assessment of Roads of Regional Significance

Work continues on the Condition Assessment of Roads of Regional Significance in the South West Region (approximately 2,100km) with video data collection complete for three Local Government areas and the remaining data collection programmed for late March and early April. Following data collection the consultant will perform the defect logging component of the program with work expected to be complete by May/June 2024.

Road Rail Interface Agreements

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

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

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

2. FUNDING

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

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

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

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

Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) Model Revisions

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

3. TRANSPORT

Regional Freight Strategy

WALGA accepted an invitation to participate in the Steering Committee overseeing the development of a new Regional Freight Strategy for Western Australia. This is an opportunity to influence the development of this strategy including ensuring that the first and last kilometre issues are not overlooked. It is currently planned to complete the review by the end of 2024, requiring significant, focussed efforts.

Bus Stop Infrastructure

The partnership agreement has been in place from 2018/19 to 2022/23. WALGA has commenced a review of the current Agreement and has consulted a cross section of Local Governments to inform negotiations with the PTA for a new Agreement. WALGA has had an initial meeting with the PTA and the first draft has been completed.

4. UTILITIES

Underground Power

Discussions with Western Power regarding a template Targeted Underground Power Program Co-Funding Agreement continued with some further matters requiring legal advice. The Minister for Energy is still considering proposed Guidelines for the Targeted Underground Power Program.

WALGA convened a meeting of technical experts from the Electrical Safety section of Building and Energy (Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety), who regulate the State's electricity rules, with Western Power and Local Governments to identify the regulatory and practical issues that need to be resolved in order to enable EV chargers to be installed in the road reserve. Several Local Governments are keen to provide this capacity as part of the underground power projects. The matters identified will be progressed by Western Power.

Project delivery is continuing for the final projects in Round 6 of the former State Underground Power Program and the Network Renewal Underground Power Program (NRUPP). Affordability remains a key concern for Local Governments. WALGA is working with the program steering committee to develop proposals that will improve affordability.

Streetlighting

Western Power provided an outline of the 2024/25 streetlight pricing proposal that it intends to submit to the Economic Regulation Authority at the end of March. There is no formal stakeholder consultation process. However, the Economic Regulation Authority has indicated that it will consider submissions and the Association is developing a response.

The Association has been advocating for an effective consultation process with Local Governments to underpin the development of a Streetlighting Strategy that reflects the diversity of needs and aspirations across the sector. While very late, Western Power has now appointed a consultant and undertaken an initial survey of Local Governments. The regulatory requirement is for Western Power to publish a Streetlighting Strategy by the end of June 2024.

5. ROAD SAFETY

Road Safety Council Update

The Road Safety Council Communiques highlight the key discussions and considerations of the Council meetings. View the Communiques via the following link:

[Road Safety Council Meeting Communiques](#)

RoadWise Councils

Fifty-eight (58) Local Governments have now registered as a RoadWise Council since August 2023. Seventy two percent (72%) registered with a Resolution of Council and 28% via a Declaration. There is a spread of RoadWise Councils across all ten Regional Road Group regions. In terms of road safety activity, 50% of registered RoadWise Councils recorded activity in the first quarter and 65% during the second quarter of 2023-24.

RoadWise Recognised

Upon registration, RoadWise Councils become eligible to participate in the new RoadWise Recognised. This initiative is designed to recognise the positive influence of RoadWise Councils on road safety, benchmark and monitor their road safety actions and create opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration through the allocation and accumulation of Ribbons and Points.

The Ribbons rating (to a maximum of five) indicates the application of a holistic approach to road safety across governance, management and operations. Ribbons are allocated annually. Points signify the effort and expected relative effectiveness of the road safety actions delivered by RoadWise Councils. Points are allocated on a quarterly basis.

In the first six months, RoadWise Councils have recorded a total of 110 activities and have been awarded 60 Ribbons and 5,920 Points, collectively. Results will be communicated back to individual RoadWise Councils via their Road Safety Advisor. The annual Ribbon status will be announced later in the year. To date there are seven Councils with a three Ribbon status, 11 with a 2 Ribbon status and 16 with a one Ribbon status.

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT

Data collection for the 2022/23 Road Assets and Expenditure Report is nearing completion and initial analysis underway. WALGA is also seeking proposals from consultants to evaluate the current Road Assets and Expenditure Report data collection and report preparation processes and, once identified, to undertake the work to improve the delivery of the Road Assets and Expenditure Report. This project will identify opportunities to streamline the data collection and support better data reporting. A contract is expected to be awarded in April 2024, with the initial scoping and information gathering element of the project completed by the end of the Financial Year 2023/2024.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Logan Howlett JP
Seconded: President Chris Antonio

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Infrastructure Portfolio for May 2024.

RESOLUTION 040.2/2024

CARRIED

10.1.3 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, MEMBER SERVICES PORTFOLIO

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Member Services Portfolio to the 1 May 2024 State Council meeting.

The Member Services Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Association and Corporate Governance*
- *Commercial Contract Services*
- *Commercial Development*
- *Commercial Management*
- *Employee Relations*
- *Governance and Procurement*
- *Training*

The following outlines the activities of the Member Services Portfolio since the 6 March 2024 State Council meeting.

1. GOVERNANCE AND PROCUREMENT

Standardised Meeting Procedures Discussion Paper

Meeting Procedures (Standing Orders) Local Laws have been the foundation for facilitating efficient and effective Council and Committee meetings. State Government's Local Government Reform includes the proposal for replacing local laws with Standard Meeting Procedures Regulation.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is consulting on proposals, with feedback required to the Department by 29 May 2024. Local Governments are encouraged to provide their feedback to the Department.

WALGA has prepared a companion Discussion Paper that melds the Department's Consultation Paper with comment to provoke thought and considered response. WALGA is seeking feedback, consolidating administrative and Council Member views by Monday, 29 April 2024. Local Government feedback will be used to develop a sector wide advocacy position for submission to the Department.

2. COMMERCIAL

Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) Development

A tender for new Preferred Suppliers across multiple Panels and Categories of supply has been issued to approximately 80 endorsed suppliers. The Tender is under evaluation and progressive contracting will occur over June and July.

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

A new category for Line Marking Services has been added to the Roads Infrastructure and Depot Services Panel. Following a public Tender new suppliers have been contracted and are now active.

New Categories of supply for the Professional Services PSP have been developed for HR and Organisational Services, with approximately 40 suppliers contracted to deliver, CEO Performance Reviews; EAP; Workplace Investigations; Change Management/Org Development and other employment related services.

New Category Development is currently being planned and developed for:

- PSP002 – Architectural Services
- PSP002-011 – Project and Operations Management
- PSP004 – Managed Accounting and Corporate Service
- PSP005 – Leisure Centre Equipment and Supplies

A full list of the [WALGA PSP panels and associated categories](#) is available on the WALGA website.

Sustainable Energy Project

The WALGA Sustainable Energy Project formally commenced on 1 April 2022 delivering aggregate energy purchases to 48 WALGA Members. Following seven completed quarters of the project the total estimated cost savings are approximately \$16 million and Carbon Offsets total approximately 48,300 tonnes.

There has been a substantial increase in the retail cost of electricity since the commencement of the project. The WALGA rates are only fixed until March 2025 and this will heavily impact the future cost of energy following the term of the initial contract.

WALGA has adopted a strategy for evolving future phases of the project. A procurement process is currently being developed.

WALGA is implementing a new Carbon Reporting Tool to support project reporting.

3. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

WA Industrial Relations Commission applications

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

- Application APPL 80 of 2023 – The Western Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union of WA (WASU) and the Local Government, Racing and Cemeteries Employees Union (WA) (LGRCEU) filed an application to increase the wages in the Municipal Employees (Western Australia) Award 2021 (ME Award). If the WASU and LGRCEU are successful, wages in the ME Award will increase for the highest level by \$285.68 per week. WALGA will act in this matter by representing those Local Governments named to the ME Award which have instructed WALGA to act as an industrial agent in their and the sector's interests. This matter has been listed for conciliation on 19 April 2024.
- Applications APPL 3 and 4 of 2023 – WALGA is responding to claims from the Western Australian Services Union for additional entitlements in the Local Government Officers' (Western Australia) Award 2021 (LGO Award) and the ME Award. This matter has not yet been listed for a hearing, but the WASU sought discovery of documents

from Local Governments and WALGA. A discovery order was made, however this order is presently stayed pending WALGA's appeal.

- Applications APPL 26 and 27 of 2023 – The decisions in these matters resulted in the Commission retaining a number of facilitative clauses in the State awards which will assist Local Government employers and employees agree on work arrangements to suit individual employee circumstances. A few amendments have been made to the ME Award and the LGO Award as a result of the decisions, including the obligation that employers must pay employees within two days of the last day of a pay cycle. APPL 27 of 2023 (which deals with the ME Award) included a variation to address wages which are below the minimum wage, this application is adjourned pending the outcome of APPL 80 of 2023.
- Application APPL 6 of 2024 – The LGRCEU has filed an application to increase the industry allowance in the ME Award (clause 19.5) from \$21.82 to \$34.82 for compensation for disabilities on construction and maintenance work. Local Governments have until 5 April 2024 to respond to this claim. The Shires of Brookton, Cue, Mount Magnet have sort to intervene in this matter.
- Application CICS 5, 8 and 9 of 2023 - Application to intervene in union demarcation dispute

In response to sector feedback, WALGA successfully applied to intervene in three applications. These applications relate to a dispute over coverage of Local Government employees between three unions, the WASU, LGRCEU and the CFMEUW. Essentially the WASU is seeking an order that it cover Local Government outside employees to the exclusion of the CFMEUW. The matter is listed for hearing for four weeks from 15 to 24 July and 29 July to 9 August 2024.

WALGA Salary and Workforce Survey 2023

The survey closed in December 2022 and the results have been uploaded to the WALGA Salary and Workforce Survey online portal. Local Governments who have completed the survey or purchased access to the portal can view the survey report and the results in the online dashboard. A webinar outlining key results was held in March and will be available on our website in due course.

People and Culture Seminar

Date has been set for 19 July 2024. It will be held at the Perth Convention Centre. The Seminar provides an opportunity to hear from expert speakers on key HR/IR topics affecting the Local Government sector, and networking opportunities. The program is in development.

4. TRAINING

WALGA Training has received high volumes of enquiries and enrolments across all training offerings including the Diploma of Local Government for Elected Members. Since the Local Government Elections in October 2023, we are pleased that so many Elected Members have undertaken their required training and feedback received so far indicates that our learners are very satisfied with our improved Council Member Essentials learning options.

LGA30120 Certificate III in Local Government

The next Certificate III in Local Government commences mid-April 2024 aligned with the school holiday terms in Western Australia. Many Local Governments realising the quality and value of this training program and are undertaking long term planning for the publicly funded traineeship options under Jobs and Skills WA or plan to train their existing workers with the Fee for Service option. Overall, the program is growing in popularity, and it is

recommended that Local Governments register their interest early ahead of time to ensure WALGA Training can offer a training place.

Brand new course offerings

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

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

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

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Logan Howlett JP
Seconded: President Chris Antonio

That State Council note the Key Activity Report from the Member Services Portfolio to the 1 May 2024 State Council meeting.

RESOLUTION 040.2/2024

CARRIED

10.1.4 REPORT ON KEY ACTIVITIES, POLICY PORTFOLIO

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager, Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

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

The Policy Portfolio comprises the following work units:

- *Economics*
- *Environment and Waste (see MWAC Report)*
- *Planning and Building*
- *Emergency Management*
- *Community*

The following outlines the Policy Portfolio's activities since the March 2024 State Council meeting.

1. ECONOMICS

March Economic Briefing

In March, WALGA released its latest [Economic Briefing](#). Local Government costs increased 0.8% in the December quarter and are expected to rise 3.1% in 2024-25. The next Economic Briefing will be in June.

Updated Economic Development Framework and New Templates Released

WALGA's [Economic Development Framework](#) was updated and re-released in March. The Framework assists local governments to define their role in economic development and guide their strategies and actions.

WALGA worked with SGS Economics to develop templates for [Business Cases and Economic Development Strategies](#), tailored to the unique needs of the Local Government sector. These templates are available for Members to be downloaded and customised to suit their local government requirements.

WALGA Presentation at the Regional Development Australia WA Conference

WALGA Economics Manager, Daniel Thomson, presented at Regional Development Australia's WA Conference on the structure and role of WALGA, WALGA's advocacy priorities and opportunities for RDAs and local governments to work together to drive regional development.

2. ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE

New Climate Change Declarations

There are 5 new signatories to the WALGA Climate Declaration, with the Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils (comprising the Shires of Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Donnybrook-Balingup, Manjimup and Nannup) signing the Declaration. This brings the total number of Local Governments making a Declaration to 56, representing over 85% of WA's population. WALGA encourages all Local Governments to become signatories.

Regional Local Government Environmental Regulation Roundtable

WALGA facilitated a virtual Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) Roundtable for regional Local Government CEOs on 19 March. This followed a similar session held for Metropolitan CEOs in December 2023. The Roundtable provided attendees with the opportunity to hear from the Department on reforms and activities underway and discuss matters of importance to the sector, including waste management, native vegetation clearing permits and offsets and licencing.

3. PLANNING AND BUILDING

Planning Fees and Charges

The Minister for Planning; Lands; Housing; Homelessness has agreed to WALGA's request for a comprehensive review of Local Government Planning Fees and Charges. The review is a significant first step to ensuring fees are set at cost recovery, appropriately indexed, and adhere to a contemporary methodology. The review will be undertaken by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). WALGA has had a constructive initial meeting with DPLH officers to discuss the parameters of the review.

Planning Information Sessions

State Planning Policy 7.3 Residential Design Codes (SPP7.3)

The amended SPP7.3, including the new Medium Density Code provisions was released on 8 March 2024, with the policy becoming operational on 1 April 2024. WALGA held a sector webinar with DPLH to inform Local Government officers of the key changes to SPP7.3, as well as the explanatory guidelines. The webinar was attended by 104 Local Government officers. Further information can be found on the [DPLH website](#).

Environmental Protection Amendment Regulations

On 12 March 2024, WALGA held a webinar alongside the EPA and the DWER, with 106 Local Government officers attending to discuss the various [planning scheme amendments that are no longer required to be assessed under the updated regulations](#).

Urban Forests

Tree Retention model Local Planning Policy Released

WALGA released a model Tree Retention Local Planning Policy in March ([Item 9.2 refers](#)).

Urban Greening Grants

The Urban Greening Grant Program, managed by WALGA and funded by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, provides \$3.75 million to support Local Governments in the Perth and Peel regions to plant trees and understorey vegetation across two funding rounds (winter 2024 and winter 2025). 12 Local Governments have been awarded \$591,839.32 in round one of the Program: Bayswater, Belmont, Gosnells, Joondalup, Kalamunda, Murray, Perth, Rockingham, South Perth, Stirling, Swan and Waroona. Collectively, these Local Governments will plant over 9,400 trees and 29,000 understorey species this winter. Plantings will occur within parks and reserves, around playgrounds, and in streetscapes that form part of key pedestrian and cycling routes connecting with business districts and community facilities.

Applications for Round Two will open in April 2024, with \$2.8 million available. Funding will be awarded in June 2024. Further information is available on the WALGA [website](#).

Urban Forest Working Group Meeting

WALGA held the Urban Forest Working Group (UFWG) on 28 March 2024, attended by over 50 Local Government officers. WALGA provided updates on the Model Local Planning Policy for Tree Retention, Tree Stock Quality, the 2024 WA Tree Festival and 2025 Urban Forest Conference. DPLH provided an overview of draft framework being developed for the Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy and the City of Bassendean presented to the group on how Local Governments can optimise use of the Urban Monitor datasets.

4. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency management Roundtable

On 20 February, WALGA CEO Nick Sloan hosted an Emergency Management Roundtable, attended by DFES and six Local Government CEOs to discuss Bushfire Management and issues arising during the 2024-25 high threat bush fire period.

State Emergency Management Committee

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) met on 6 March attended by WALGA CEO Nick Sloan. SEMC Communiques are available [here](#).

Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan

The Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan (EM-SAP) is being developed by the SEMC Climate Change Subcommittee (CCSC) to embed climate change adaptation considerations into the Western Australian emergency management sector. The EM-SAP will be one of seven sector-based plans delivered to help implement the Western Australian Climate Adaptation Strategy required under the *Climate Change Bill 2023*.

With the support of Pod Consultancy, WALGA undertook consultation with the sector during February and March, with representatives from 32 diverse WA Local Governments participating. A Consultation Summary Report that summarises the feedback from WALGA's EM-SAP consultation activities has been submitted to the SEMC Business Unit as preliminary findings. A formal WALGA EM-SAP submission, that includes recommendations aligned with WALGA's [Emergency Management Advocacy Positions](#) is will be submitted to State Council for endorsement via the Flying Minute process on 11 April 2024. WALGA's submission will inform the development of a final EM-SAP that will be submitted for endorsement by the SEMC in mid-2024.

5. Community

Aboriginal Affairs

Local Government Reconciliation Resource Hub

WALGA is partnering with Reconciliation WA and State Agencies to development an online platform for a Local Government Reconciliation Resource Hub. The platform will provide a one stop shop to support Local Governments to undertake reconciliation community engagement, statutory, legislative, policy and regulatory obligations. All parties have now signed the project MOU, activating LotteryWest funding. WALGA has contributed \$25,000 towards the Hub and will continue to work with Reconciliation WA and the sector to provide content and case studies for inclusion.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

On 22 February 2024, WALGA convened an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Roundtable for the Gascoyne Zone in Carnarvon. The aim of the roundtable was to gain a shared understanding of the requirements under the amended *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and its interaction with heritage surveys, Standard Heritage Agreements, and Indigenous Land Use Agreements; and to share Local Government feedback and progress implementation

solutions applicable across the Local Government Sector in partnership with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH). The discussion provided some practical solutions and proposals which WALGA is seeking to progress with DPLH, aligned to the State Government's commitment to guidance and support for the sector.

National Reconciliation Week Webinar

National Reconciliation Week runs from 27 May – 3 June 2024 with the theme 'Now More Than Ever'. In partnership with WALGA, Reconciliation WA held a National Reconciliation Week (NRW), attended by 86 Local Government representatives which provided information on how the sector can be involved in this year's NRW.

Commencement of Part 5 of the Public Health Act 2016

In March, the State Government announced that [Part 5 of the Public Health Act 2016](#) will be phased in from 4 June 2024. Under Part 5 the Department of Health must finalise and publish a new State Public Health Plan by 4 June 2025 and Local governments are required to create local public health plans that are consistent with the State Public Health Plan by 4 June 2026. In addition, some low-risk public health regulations will be replaced with guidelines and improvement notices and enforcement orders will be introduced.

The Department of Health has committed to provide updates and engage with Local Governments to ensure a collaborative and informed approach to implementation. WALGA is working with the State Government to secure support and guidance for the sector.

Town Team Training

WALGA is delivering a free workshop for Local Governments to learn about the establishment and facilitation of resilient places through the Town Team Movement on Monday, 20 May at WALGA. Attendees will learn how to find innovative opportunities in a Local Government context, reduce risks in place improvement and community development projects, and better engage local businesses and residents.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Logan Howlett JP
Seconded: President Chris Antonio

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

RESOLUTION 040.2/2024

CARRIED

10.2 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Logan Howlett JP

Seconded: President Chris Antonio

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

RESOLUTION 040.2/2024

CARRIED

10.3 CEO'S REPORT

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Mayor Logan Howlett JP

Seconded: President Chris Antonio

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

RESOLUTION 040.2/2024

CARRIED

11 ADDITIONAL ZONE RESOLUTIONS

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That the additional Zone Resolutions from the April 2024 round of Zones meetings as follows be referred to the appropriate portfolio for consideration and appropriate action.

AVON MIDLAND COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

SMS Service - Request for Local Government Grants Scheme to Cover Costs

That Avon-Midland Country Zone requests that WALGA advocates for the total cost of Short Messaging Services operated by local governments for community messaging relating to harvest vehicle movement and hot works Bans and total fire bans be included as an eligible item of expenditure under the Local Government Grants Scheme and the Emergency Services Levy Scheme.

AVON MIDLAND COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Aboriginal Heritage Approvals Process

That the Avon-Midland Country Zone request the WA Local Government Association to facilitate for local governments within the Zone a workshop with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on the approvals process and associated requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972.

CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio – Economics)

Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability

That Central Country Zone requests WALGA to prepare and submit a comprehensive submission on behalf of local governments in Western Australia to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport inquiry on local government sustainability as follows;

1. WALGA is requested to address the following areas in its submission:
 - a. Financial sustainability and funding mechanisms for local governments.
 - b. Changing infrastructure and service delivery requirements faced by local governments.
 - c. Structural impediments to job security and infrastructure delivery in local government.
 - d. Trends in attracting and retaining skilled workforce in the local government sector, including the impact of labour hire practices.
 - e. The role of the Australian Government in addressing the above issues.
 - f. Any other relevant matters related to local government sustainability.
2. The submission should be aligned with the Terms of Reference outlined by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport.
3. WALGA is encouraged to collaborate with local governments across Western Australia to gather diverse perspectives and insights for the submission.
4. Local governments within the WALGA Zone are urged to support and contribute to the development of the submission through active participation and sharing of relevant information and expertise.

CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Wind Energy Facilities

That the Central Country Zone requests WALGA to make a submission on behalf of local governments in Western Australia to the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC), urging the State Government, through its agency Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH), to develop a more comprehensive and effective approach to guide the management and placement of renewable energy facilities; including but not limited to wind, solar, battery renewable diesel and any associated infrastructure.

EAST METROPOLITAN ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Waste Funding Advocacy

That the East Metropolitan Zone requests WALGA advocates to the WA Government that appropriate funding mechanisms be established as grants and/or interest free long term investment partnerships with the Local Government sector and their regional associations, to fast-track the establishment of infrastructure that improves circular waste processing within the state.

GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Agricultural Land Use

That the Great Eastern Country Zone recommend that WALGA:

1. In considering Agricultural Land Use, establishes and promotes policy templates to guide Local Governments for their individual adoption to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land.
2. Within the Policy includes such uses but not limited to tree planting for offsets or carbon, renewable energy generation and transmission.

3. Investigates potential impacts to local government rates on rural land, that has approved long term tree planting for different purposes, for example but not limited to planting for carbon offsets, planting for clearing offsets, or planting for renewable fuels; and renewable energy investments.
4. Provides advice to local government on what Policies or Special Area Rates should be considered for the land affected.

GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Government Regional Officer Housing Program

The Great Southern Country Zone requests:

1. WALGA advocacy to State Government for the Government Regional Officer Housing Program to:
 - a. Increase State Government capital investment in the GROH program and review and address the impact of current policy settings on the wider regional housing shortage, including:
 - i. GROH Leasing and purchasing from the established residential private market (Spot Purchase program).
 - ii. Prioritise the State's development of land to service GROH demand and reduce pressure on already constrained availability of regional residential land supplies.
 - b. Review the GROH program policy settings, so that proposals for GROH development in partnership with Local Government align to regional commercial viability and financial capacity of the Local Government, including:
 - i. Enabling State Agency leasing agreement periods of 20 years or greater.
 - ii. State Agency contribution to capital costs, with commensurate lower rental returns.
 - c. Release the GROH Program Review, undertaken by the Department of Communities in 2023, to facilitate further discussion of the viability and future of GROH program policy settings as it relates to the Local Government sector and regional housing availability.
2. The Zone Secretariat write to the responsible Minister/s advocating for the matters outlined in Part 1 above.

NORTH METROPOLITAN ZONE (Member Services Portfolio)

North Metropolitan Zone Election Protocols

That the North Metropolitan Zone request the WALGA secretariat to draft a document for the Zone to consider how it would include in its standing orders a methodology of election of Zone Chair, Zone Deputy Chair, State Councillors and Deputy State Councillors, that ensures fair and equal representation of all Member Councils.

PILBARA COUNTRY ZONE (Member Services Portfolio)

State Government Owned Infrastructure

That the Pilbara Country Zone request WALGA to raise the matter of investigating infrastructure owned by State Government with the Office of the Auditor General.

GREAT SOUTHERN COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Modifications to the Caravan Ground and Camping Regulations to Facilitate Living in a Tiny House on Wheels

That the Great Southern County Zone:

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

SOUTH WEST COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Caravan and Camping Regulations Advocacy

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

SOUTH WEST COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

South West DAMA Annual Report

The South West Country Zone:

Requests WALGA to give an update to the Zone on their position on a Statewide DAMA and the merits of this approach.

CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Enhanced and Alternative Education Opportunities for Regional WA

That the Central Country Zone:

1. Supports the call to action to reduce regional disadvantage in educational opportunities, with a focus on:
 - a. Disruption to schools arising from policies relating to permanency for teachers;
 - b. Requesting clarity about how schools are classified as "hard to staff; and
 - c. Improving housing for teachers in regional WA;
2. Agrees to write to the Minister for Education requesting action; and
3. Requests the WALGA Secretariat to advocate to State Government on this matter.

AVON MIDLAND COUNTRY ZONE, GASCOYNE COUNTRY ZONE, GOLDFIELDS ESPERANCE COUNTRY ZONE, GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE, GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE, GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE, KIMBERLEY COUNTRY ZONE, MURCHISON COUNTRY ZONE and PILBARA COUNTRY ZONE (Policy Portfolio)

Enhanced and Alternative Education Opportunities for Regional WA

The above Zones passed the following resolution, as requested by the Great Southern Country Zone:

1. Supports the call to action to reduce regional disadvantage in educational opportunities,
2. Agrees to write to the Minister for Education requesting action; and
3. Requests the WALGA Secretariat to advocate to State Government on this matter.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Chris Antonio
Seconded: Cr John Daw

That the additional Zone Resolutions from the April 2024 round of Zones meetings as follows be referred to the appropriate portfolio for consideration and appropriate action.

RESOLUTION 041.2/2024

CARRIED

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the WALGA State Council will be held in the Boardroom at WALGA, ONE70, LV1, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville on Wednesday, 10 July 2024 commencing at 4.15pm.

13 CLOSURE

The Chair expressed thanks to the City of Wanneroo for hosting State Council for the Metropolitan Regional meeting.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.22pm.

STATUS REPORT ON STATE COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
6 March 2024 Item 7.1 Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB) Biosecurity Response and Implications for Local Government	That State Council note: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The significant threat PSHB represents to growth and retention of urban forests. 2. WALGA and Local Government’s engagement in the PSHB biosecurity response. 3. The importance of shared surveillance by government, industry and community to assist with eradication efforts. 4. The need for funding for trees lost due to PSHB and ameliorate the long term urban canopy impact. RESOLUTION 003.1/2024	For noting.	Complete	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
6 March 2024 Item 8.1 Separation (Centre) And Edge Line Markings by Local Government on Low Volume Rural Roads	That WALGA endorse the below Advocacy Position: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main Roads Western Australia allow Local Governments to install edge line and separation (centre) line markings on roads that meet all relevant criteria, but do not meet the criterion on traffic volume. 2. Main Roads Western Australia to consider reducing the traffic volume threshold in the Main Roads warrant for installing separation (centre) lines to recognise the proven safety benefits. 3. For this exemption, Local Governments must adhere to the following conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Local Government contact Main Roads via the Regional Network Manager with their intent to undertake line marking on specific roads that do not meet the traffic volume criterion, but meet all the other criteria. b) The Local Government obtain a Council resolution, committing to fund all installation and maintenance costs. c) Local Government undertake spotting/surveying. d) Main Roads to undertake an inspection following the survey/spotting work, confirm the start and finish points for the longitudinal line markings, 	The Advocacy Positions Manual has been updated.	March 2024	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<p>and record the sections of road with line markings to be maintained by Local Government in the relevant database.</p> <p>e) Main Roads approve the final layout prior to line marking occurring.</p> <p>f) Local Government undertake the works.</p> <p>g) Local Government maintain the works in accordance with Main Roads WA standards.</p> <p>h) Local Government remove the lines if maintenance works are not performed to the standard.</p> <p>RESOLUTION 004.1/2024</p>			
<p>6 March 2024 Item 8.2 Recovered Materials Framework Advocacy Position</p>	<p>That WALGA:</p> <p>1. Rescind the existing WALGA <i>Standards for Recycled Organics Applied to Land Policy Statement 2007</i> and Advocacy Position 7.9:</p> <p>Local Government:</p> <p>1. Acknowledges the benefits of applying recycled organics to land, especially as a means of diverting organic material from landfill; and,</p> <p>2. Supports the development of standards for applying recycled organics to land, to ensure a fit for purpose product is developed.</p> <p>2. Endorse a new <i>Recovered Materials Framework Advocacy Position</i> as follows:</p> <p>The use of recovered materials, across a range of applications, is essential in reducing the use of basic raw materials, meeting State Waste Strategy Targets and increasing diversion of waste from landfill. To ensure end users have high confidence in the quality and safety of products derived from recovered materials, consistent, outcomes-based standards and investment certainty are required.</p>	<p>The Advocacy Positions Manual has been updated.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy</p>

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<p>The State Government, in consultation with Local Government and the waste management industry, should take a leadership role in facilitating the use of recovered material by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing a regulatory framework which: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outlines clear, outcomes-based specifications for individual products which take into consideration the receiving environment and allow for site-specific assessment. b. Minimises risk to human health and the environment from the use of recovered material. c. Establishes robust systems to provide quality assurance and ongoing surveillance throughout the supply chain. 2. Providing guidance and support mechanisms for the successful implementation of the framework. 3. Supporting the development of, and access to, sustainable end markets and long-term offtake agreements through initiatives such as active engagement with potential end users and the inclusion of recovered material content targets in Government procurement and large infrastructure projects. <p>RESOLUTION 005.1/2024</p>			
<p>6 March 2024 Item 8.3 Review of Cemeteries Act 1986 and Cremation Act 1929 Discussion Paper</p>	<p>That WALGA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports the intent of the Review of Cemeteries Act 1986 and Cremation Act 1929 Discussion Paper to reduce red tape, modernise legislation and standardise administrative practices; 2. Supports the intent of providing accessibility for alternative types of burials and disposal of human remains; and 3. Advocates that Local Government cemetery managers retain the capacity to impose cemetery fees and charges under Part 6 of the Local Government Act. 	<p>Correspondence sent to Minister for Local Government.</p> <p>The Advocacy Positions Manual has been updated.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services</p>

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	RESOLUTION 006.1/2024			
6 March 2024 Item 8.4 Selection Committee Guidelines Review	That State Council endorse the Selection Committee Guidelines – <i>Selection Process for Appointments to State Government, Federal Government, WALGA and other Boards and Committees</i> , subject to the removal of the last dot point in Part D(i) i.e. whether the nominee has been sanctioned by the Local Government Standards Panel. RESOLUTION 008.1/2024	Guidelines have been updated.	March 2024	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
6 March 2024 Item 8.5 Selection Committee Minutes – 19 December 2023 and 20 February 2024	That: 3. the resolutions contained in the 19 December 2023 Special Selection Committee Meeting Minutes be noted; and 4. the recommendations contained in the 20 February 2024 Selection Committee Meeting Minutes be endorsed. RESOLUTION 009.1/2024	Selection Committee resolutions have been actioned.	March 2024	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
6 March 2024 Item 8.6 Finance and Services Committee Minutes – 21 February 2024	That the Minutes of the Finance and Services Committee meeting held on 21 February 2024 be endorsed. RESOLUTION 010.1/2024	The WALGA Budget Plan 2024–25 is currently being implemented. The WALGA Investment Project will be referred to the 24/25 WALGA budget for funding for a full business plan.		Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
6 March 2024 Item 8.9 LGIS Board Remuneration	That State Council approve the remuneration for LGIS Board Members be increased by 6% for the 2024-25 financial year as per the LGIS Corporate Governance Charter guidance. RESOLUTION 013.1/2024	The remuneration increase will be implemented for the 24/25 financial year.	March 2024	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
6 March 2024 Item 8.11 Use of the Association's Common Seal	That State Council: 1. Approve the use of the Common Seal for the \$65.9M LGIS Bank Guarantee for 2024. 2. Note the use of the Association's common seal for the following purposes: a. Funding Agreement between Department of Water and Energy and WA Local Government Association, and b. Fifth Deed of Amendment to Facility Agreement. RESOLUTION 015.1/2024	Noted	March 2024	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
6 March 2024 Item 9.2 Governance Policy Team Report	That State Council: ... 3. Determine to: a. retain the following Advocacy Positions unchanged: i. 2.1.8 Differential Rates ii. 2.1.16 Recovery of Mining Tenement Rates b. retire the following WALGA Advocacy Position: i. 2.5.1 Public Notices ii. 2.5.21 Recordings and Live Streaming of Council Meetings RESOLUTION 017.1/2024	The Advocacy Positions Manual has been updated.	March 2024	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
6 December 2023 Item 7.1 2023 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	That the following resolutions from the 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the appropriate Policy Team for further work to be undertaken ... 5.1 Local Governments' representation at the State Administrative Tribunal relating to planning matters within its district <i>That WALGA lobby the State Government for legislative reform to enable Local Governments the automatic right to be a represented party at all State Administrative Tribunal hearings related to planning matters within its district.</i>	That the Environment Policy Team met on 16 February 2024 and determined: That the Environment Policy Team: 1. Note the 2023 AGM resolution, that WALGA lobby the State Government for legislative reform to enable Local Governments the automatic right to be a represented party at all State Administrative Tribunal hearings related to planning matters within its district.		Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy

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	RESOLUTION 501.5/2023	<p>2. Note that the AGM resolution is consistent with the intent of WALGA Advocacy Position 6.3 Third Party Appeal Rights, and 6.4 Development Assessment Panels.</p> <p>3. Requests that WALGA continue to pursue advocacy consistent with these positions as part of the Planning reform process.</p> <p>The WALGA Secretariat supports in principle the motion and notes that the DAP Advocacy Position is scheduled for review later in 2024. Proposals such as those raised by the Shire of Toodyay will be considered during this review.</p>		
<p>6 December 2023 Item 7.1 2023 Annual General Meeting Resolutions</p>	<p>That the following resolutions from the 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the appropriate Policy Team for further work to be undertaken</p> <p>...</p> <p>5.2 Land Use Policy <i>That WALGA establish and promote policies to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land.</i></p> <p>RESOLUTION 501.5/2023</p>	<p>This matter was considered by the Environment Policy Team at its meeting on 16 February.</p> <p>That the Environment Policy Team:</p> <p>1. Note the Research Paper: Protection of Productive Agricultural Land and the next steps outlined in the paper.</p> <p>In response, WALGA has prepared a Research Paper: Protection of Productive Agricultural Land that provides the policy context, history of WALGA's advocacy and analysis of State and Local Government approaches to agricultural land use protections.</p> <p>The Research Paper outlines how the Western Australian planning framework guides planning for rural land uses and assets and the current tools available to Local Governments to adapt their local</p>		<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy</p>

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		<p>planning frameworks to respond to the concerns raised at the WALGA AGM.</p> <p>WALGA will meet with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to discuss their progress with the various initiatives being undertaken on a State level to protect priority agricultural land.</p> <p>Following this, WALGA will report back to the Policy Team on potential further actions, and WALGA should pursue taking an advocacy position on this matter, and the scope and extent to any potential advocacy position.</p>		
<p>6 December 2023 Item 7.1 2023 Annual General Meeting Resolutions</p>	<p>That the following resolutions from the 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the appropriate Policy Team for further work to be undertaken</p> <p>...</p> <p>5.4 Regional and Remote Housing <i>That WALGA advocates to the WA State and Commonwealth Governments to address the dire shortage of affordable key worker family housing options in regional and remote towns to encourage families to live and work in regional and remote towns. Social housing is addressed at both the State and Federal levels.</i></p> <p>RESOLUTION 501.5/2023</p>	<p>WALGA housing advocacy ongoing.</p>		<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy</p>
<p>1 March 2023 Item 7.4 Submission on Draft Guideline Minimising Noise Impact from Outdoor</p>	<p>That WALGA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note that the Environment Minister has withdrawn the Draft Guideline: Minimising noise impact from outdoor community basketball. Write to the Ministers for Environment, Local Government, Sport and Planning requesting the formation of a cross Government working group, including relevant 	<p>Correspondence sent and issue raised with the Minister's office on multiple occasions. WALGA will continue to pursue a response.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy</p>

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
Community Basketball Facilities	representative bodies, to consider and develop solutions to balance urban density and infill, public recreation and noise management. RESOLUTION 422.1/2023			
7 December 2022 Item 5.1 2022 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	The following resolutions from the 2022 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the relevant Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: ... 3.1 Road Traffic Issues <i>That WALGA advocate on behalf of the local government sector to the State Government and in particular, Main Roads, to increase importance and weight given to local knowledge and input regarding road traffic issues including requests for speed reduction, intersection treatments and overall preventative and traffic safety measures.</i> RESOLUTION 394.8/2022	The Infrastructure Policy Team resolved: <i>That efforts to increase the importance given to Local Government knowledge regarding traffic issues be deferred for consideration in mid-2023 after a clear Local Government advocacy position on speed management is developed and endorsed.</i> This matter is central to the new Speed Management Policy adopted by State Council in May 2023. Implementation strategy being considered.	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure
7 December 2022 Item 5.1 2022 Annual General Meeting Resolutions	The following resolutions from the 2022 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the relevant Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: ... 3.2 Car Parking and Traffic Congestion Around Schools <i>That WALGA engages with the State Government on behalf of Local Government to review issues associated with car parking and traffic congestion around school sites including but not limited to:</i> <i>1. Reviewing car parking standards for schools;</i> <i>2. Ensuring sufficient land is set aside for the provision of parking on school sites;</i> <i>3. Reviewing the co-location of schools to avoid issues being exacerbated;</i> <i>4. Restricting school access from major roads;</i> <i>5. Developing plans to enable schools to manage school traffic;</i> <i>6. Develop programs to educate drivers; and</i>	The Infrastructure Policy Team resolved: <i>That WALGA uses its role at the Safe Active Travel to School Working Group to advocate for these outcomes and provide advice back to the Local Government sector.</i>	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<p>7. <i>Develop options and implement initiatives to encourage alternative modes of transport to school.</i></p> <p>RESOLUTION 394.8/2022</p>			
<p>7 December 2022 Item 5.1 2022 Annual General Meeting Resolutions</p>	<p>The following resolutions from the 2022 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the relevant Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:</p> <p>3.3 Proposal for Regional Road Maintenance Contracts with Main Roads WA <i>That WALGA assist Local Governments and work with the Hon Minister Rita Saffioti to introduce a similar program that is currently in play in Queensland and introduce a sole invitee Program for Local Governments to engage in a Road Maintenance Performance Contract with Main Roads WA.</i></p> <p>RESOLUTION 394.8/2022</p>	<p>The Infrastructure Policy Team resolved: <i>That the opportunities and interest in contracting Local Governments to undertake maintenance and minor works on the State road network be explored in discussion with Main Roads WA.</i></p>	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure
<p>7 December 2022 Item 5.1 2022 Annual General Meeting Resolutions</p>	<p>The following resolutions from the 2022 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the relevant Policy Team for further work to be undertaken: ...</p> <p>3.4 Northern Australia Beef Roads Program <i>That WALGA work with the Hon Madeleine King MP Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia to make Beef Road Funding available to all Australian Local Governments north and south, or establish a Southern Australia Beef Road Funding Program to allow for equitable support across Australia's beef and agriculture industries.</i></p> <p>RESOLUTION 394.8/2022</p>		Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure
<p>1 December 2021 Item 5.3 2021 Annual General Meeting</p>	<p>That the following resolutions from the 2021 WALGA Annual General Meeting be endorsed for action: Cost of Regional Development</p>	<p>In March the State Government announced the establishment of a new Infrastructure Development Fund that includes a stream to support the delivery of regional worker</p>	Ongoing	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
	<p><i>That WALGA makes urgent representation to the State Government to address the high cost of development in regional areas for both residential and industrial land, including the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks, which has led to market failure in many regional towns.</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>RESOLUTION 294.7/2021</p>	<p>accommodation with applications open until September 2024. This is an infrastructure investment program to address infrastructure constraints in the water, wastewater and electricity network at a precinct or strategic site scale impacting the delivery of regional worker accommodation. Full details can be found here.</p>		
<p>3 September 2021 Item 6.1 Stop Puppy Farming Legislation</p>	<p>1. That the update on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 be noted.</p> <p>2. That:</p> <p>a. any additional costs incurred by a Local Government in administering the Dog Act be paid by the State Government; and</p> <p>b. the Fees and Charges set in Regulations are reviewed bi-annually and at minimum, be adjusted by the Local Government Cost Index.</p> <p>RESOLUTION 275.5/2021</p>	<p>The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries released a Consultation Paper prepared by consultants Marsden Jacob Associates on the new and existing fees and charges under the <i>Dog Act 1976</i> and <i>Cat Act 2011</i> relating to the Stop Puppy Farming initiative.</p> <p>Local Governments were encouraged to consider the various fees and charges proposed to be introduced for the following approvals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog and cat registration by owners and contributions to the Centralised Registration System; • Dog supply approvals; • Approvals to breed for dogs; • Pet shop approvals (only applicable to dogs). <p>The consultation period closed on 15 March 2024 and WALGA provided a submission in line with State Councils advocacy position as follows;</p> <p><i>That WALGA:</i></p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services</p>

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	COMPLETION DATE	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcomes a cost modelling review of the financial impact on Local Governments to ensure that Local Government is able to fully recover costs and not be disadvantaged in ensuring compliance of any new legislation to Stop Puppy Farming; 2. Supports a centralised dog registration system that is developed, operated and maintained by State Government; 3. Any additional costs incurred by a Local Government in administering the Dog Act be paid by the State Government; and 4. The Fees and Charges set in Regulations are reviewed biennially and at minimum, be adjusted by the Local Government Cost Index¹. 		