

Great Eastern Country Zone Minutes

13 August 2026

**Hosted by the Shire of Bruce Rock
Shire Hall, 54 Johnson St
Commenced at 9:30am**

ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following items are the Zone's priority issues, as resolved at the April 2026 Zone meeting:

- Regional Health Services to include:
 - Hospitals
 - Aged Care
 - Future of Nurse Practitioner Service
- Energy, Transport and Road Network
- Regional Housing and GROH
- Telecommunications
- Agricultural Land Use
- St John Ambulance Service
- Education
- Waste Management
- Regional Subsidiaries

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1. OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1. OPENING

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:35am.

1.2. ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council

Shire of Bruce Rock	President Cr Ramesh Rajagopalan Cr Stephen Strange Mr Mark Furr, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Cunderdin	President Cr Alison Harris Mr Stuart Hobley, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Dowerin	President Cr Darrel Hudson Cr Robert Trepp
Shire of Kellerberrin	Cr Emily Ryan Mr Raymond Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer, voting delegate
Shire of Kondinin	Deputy President, Cr Beverley Gangell Mr Bruce Wright, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Merredin	President Cr Donna Crook Cr Paul Boehme Mr Craig Watts, Chief Executive Officer, deputy delegate
Shire of Mount Marshall	President Cr Tony Sachse
Shire of Mukinbudin	President Cr Gary Shadbolt Ms Tanika McLennan, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Narembeen	President Cr Holly Cusack Deputy President, Cr Hannah Bald Raj Sunner, Executive Manager Corporate Services
Shire of Nungarin	President Cr Pippa de Lacy
Shire of Tammin	Deputy President, Cr Tanya Nicholls Mr Andrew Malone, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Trayning	President Cr Melanie Brown Mr Peter Naylor, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Yilgarn	President Cr Bryan Close Mr Ben Forbes, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

Shire of Wyalkatchem Cr Rob Lawson Kerr
Mr Tom Kettle, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

GUESTS

WALGA President Mayor Mark Irwin
Main Roads WA Mr Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt
Ms Vicky Eckersley, Customer Services Manager
Wheatbelt Development Commission Ms Renee Manning, A/Chief Executive Officer
CBH Group Ms Emma Haak, Planning and Approvals Lead
Mr Timothy Roberts, Specialist - Regulatory Approvals
Lumen Wheatbelt Study Hubs Ms Hannah Crute, Projects and Communications Officer
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Ms Renae Thorpe, A/Manager Water Planning, Approvals - Statewide Delivery

WALGA

Mr Sam McLeod, Manager Commercial Services
Ms Habiba Farrag, State Council Governance Officer

1.3. APOLOGIES

MEMBERS

Shire of Dowerin Cr Ashley Jones
Mrs Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

Shire of Kondinin Cr Toni Smeed

Shire of Koorda President Cr Jannah Stratford
Deputy President, Cr Gary Greaves
Mr Zac Donovan, Chief Executive Officer, deputy voting delegate

Shire of Mt Marshall Deputy President, Cr Nicholas Gillett
Mr Ben McKay, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

Shire of Narembeen Ms Rebecca McCall, Chief Executive Officer, deputy voting delegate

Shire of Nungarin Cr Gary Coumbe
Mr David Nayda, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

Shire of Tammin President Cr Charmaine Thomson

Shire of Westonia President Cr Mark Crees
Deputy President, Cr Ross Della Bosca
Mr Bill Price, Chief Executive Officer

Shire of Wyalkatchem President Cr Christy Petchell
Deputy President, Cr Mischa Stratford

Shire of Yilgarn Cr Donna Newbury

GUESTS

Regional Development Mr Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development

Australia WA

Water Corporation Ms Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer &
Stakeholder – Goldfields & Agricultural Region

Wheatbelt District Emergency Ms Shelby Robinson
Management Committee

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Hon Melissa Price MP, Member for Durack

Mr Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor

Hon Steve Martin MLC

Mr Lachlan Hunter MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt

Mr Peter Rundle MLA, Member for Roe

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We, the Great Eastern Country Zone of WALGA acknowledge the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Nil.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nil.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT 'VIRTUAL HOST'

A Zone member Local Government is invited to make a short (10 minutes) presentation on what is occurring in their Local Government.

The Shire of Bruce Rock made a presentation at this meeting.

The **Shire of Dowerin** is invited to make a presentation to next Zone meeting, in November.

6. GUEST SPEAKERS

Guest Speaker Protocols

- *The main speaker or keynote address to the Zone will be generally 30 minutes with 15 minutes for questions*
- *Other guest speakers will have a time limit of 20 minutes with 10 minutes for questions.*

6.1. WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WALGA President, Mayor Mark Irwin AM, provided the President's Report.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Bruce Rock

That the WALGA President's Report be received.

CARRIED

6.2. SPEAKERS FOR THE AUGUST ZONE MEETING

6.2.1. LUMEN WHEATBELT STUDY HUBS

Ms Hannah Crute, Projects and Communications Officer

Lumen Wheatbelt Study Hubs provided an overview of the program and the services provided.

Noted

6.2.2. DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

Ms Renae Thorpe, A/Manager Water Planning, Approvals - Statewide Delivery

Noted

7. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Nil.

8. AGENCY REPORTS

Agency Reports Protocols

The Zone appreciates and prefers written updates (circulated with the Agenda) wherever possible. Agency representatives are invited to make brief (5 minute) remarks if the speaker wishes to provide context or a further update on a specific matter.

The Zone appreciates if time can be left for questions, typically for around 10 minutes. Briefings on a significant policy proposal or contentious topic are to be dealt with by the agency representative attending as a Guest or Keynote Speaker (item 6).

8.1. DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY

The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety report was submitted for the Zone. (Attachment 2)

Noted

8.2. WHEATBELT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Ms Renee Manning, A/Chief Executive Officer

A verbal update was provided to the Zone.

Noted

8.3. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHEATBELT

Mr Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development is an apology to the meeting.

The Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt report was distributed with the Agenda.

Noted

8.4. WATER CORPORATION

Please see the media release [here](#) relating to the announcement of the **winning bid for the GAWSS upgrade**:

WA-based Georgiou Group and SRG Global McConnell Dowell Joint Venture have secured contracts for the pipeline replacement works to deliver the \$543 million upgrade of the Goldfields and Agricultural Water Supply Scheme (GAWSS).

The upgrades will enable an additional 7.2ML of additional daily capacity across the scheme.

Works will include:

- Replacements and upgrades of 44.5 kilometres of ageing pipeline, mostly the original pipe, in the Shires of Merredin, Westonia, and Yilgarn, with new sections installed primarily below ground alongside the existing route
- Valve upgrades to improve network reliability
- Upgrades to the Binduli Reservoir in Kalgoorlie, doubling the water storage capacity

Burracoppin tank update:

- The Burracoppin tank is located in the Shire of Merredin. A minor leak was first reported a few years ago and was reported to have worsened significantly in May.
- To take the tank offline to try and fix it immediately, with no interim solution, would have impacted the 50 services receiving water from this part of the scheme.
- Water Corporation has now isolated the old tank and bypassed it with two 50-kilolitre temporary tanks installed on site to avoid water continuing to be lost.
- Permanent replacement options are currently being assessed.

Noted

8.5. CBH

Ms Emma Haak, Planning and Approvals Lead

A verbal update was provided to the Zone.

Noted

8.6. MAIN ROADS

Ms Vicky Eckersley, Customer Services Manager

Questions were provided to Ms Eckersley to Main Roads.

Noted

9. MINUTES

9.1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2026

The revised Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on 11 June 2026 were provided with the Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Trayning

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Great Eastern Country Zone held on 11 June 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

CARRIED

9.2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2026

Nil.

9.3. MINUTES OF THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2026

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 21 July 2026 were provided as an attachment.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Nungarin

Seconded: Shire of Narembeen

That the Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 21 July 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2026

9.4.1. ZONE FORUM

The next Zone Forum is scheduled for 11 March 2027, to be hosted by the Shire of Cunderdin. The Zone has expressed a strong desire for the program to be directly relevant to member Local Governments. The working theme of “***Growing the Wheatbelt in a Changing World***” provides for sessions to consider global/national trends and issues and examine how they may impact on the Wheatbelt.

The Zone’s Executive has been considering how to design the Forum to maximise impact and relevance for Zone Members, while managing costs. At its July meeting, the Executive Committee resolved to recommend a Zone-led model, with Zone members being invited to design sessions relevant to specific issues. A proposed framework of the Forum is presented below:

Session	Topic	Potential WALGA SME Assistance	Responsible Members "Session Group"	Potential Speakers/Ideas
Welcome breakfast (from 7 am)				
Session 1 (~70 mins)	Growing returns (Supporting industry and employment in the Wheatbelt - perhaps Ag, Energy, Manufacturing)	Economics	Bruce Rock, Dowerin, Kellerberrin	Relevant Ministers/Decision-makers; DPIRD (biomass etc.); Wheatbelt Development Commission; Agronomist; Interstate keynote; Energy policy specialists; success stories from local businesses
Morning Tea (10am)				
Session 2a (~60 mins)	Growing and caring (Health, Housing, and/or Wellbeing)	Community	Merredin, Kondinin, Cunderdin	DoHW; Minister for Housing; DevelopmentWA; WACHS; Rural Health West; Minister for Health; Mental Health Orgs; Minister for Education
Session 2b (~60 mins)	Growth and movement (The future of agricultural and mining supply chains)	Infrastructure	Yilgarn, Westonia, Trayning	Arc Infrastructure; CBH; Main Roads; WAPOL; Road Safety Commission; trucking companies; transport researchers
Lunch (1 pm)				
Session 3 (~70 mins)	Growing Resilience (Emergency Management and essential infrastructure - e.g. telecoms, fuel, water)	EM Community	Mount Marshall, Tammin, Wyalkatchem, Koorda	DFES; Fuel Coordinator; Community organisations; Disaster management experts; Telstra; Water Corp; Western Power
Afternoon Tea (3:30 pm)				

Session	Topic	Potential WALGA SME Assistance	Responsible Members "Session Group"	Potential Speakers/Ideas
Session 4 (~60 mins)	Growing the future (Advocacy and development for the leaders of tomorrow; community development; equity/inclusion)	Advocacy; Community	Narembeen, Nungarin, Mukinbudin	Current and former leaders (MPs, community leaders, Noongar elders, council members, member CEOs, sector legends, journalists etc.); advocacy specialists, etc.
Sundowner (5 pm)				

The Group of Zone members (including delegates and any support staff from their Local Governments) assigned to each session (the "Session Group") is therefore asked to determine and agree:

1. The format of each session - including whether it involves:
 - a. A single keynote address (with or without audience Q+A),
 - b. Consecutive presentations (with or without Q+A),
 - c. Panel discussions (with or without Q+A),
 - d. Audience workshop-style table discussions
 - e. Other content
2. The list of desired speakers for the session, with:
 - a. The intended role of each speaker:
 - i. within the proposed format (are they delivering a keynote, participating in a panel, taking audience questions, etc.); and
 - ii. particular topics or things the speaker is requested to address with enough detail for WALGA to convert into personalised email requests.
 - b. Additional/substitute speakers, with a clear order of preference, to enable WALGA to recruit enough speakers for the intended session format.

A template for this purpose has been prepared overleaf:

Template: Zone Forum Session Summary (to be fully completed by each Session Group)

Session number and topic:	[E.g. Session 1 - Growing returns – Future of grain growing and new tourism opportunities in the central Wheatbelt)]			
Format:	[Please describe – whether it involves: 1. A single keynote address (with or without audience Q+A), 2. Consecutive presentations (with or without Q+A), 3. Panel discussions (with or without Q+A), 4. Audience workshop-style table discussions 5. Other content Please describe how you would like time within the session to be allocated with as much detail as possible.]			
What key focus areas or issues do you want to explore in this session?	[Please describe the main focus of what is to be presented, and what you want the audience to come away with at the end of the session. What will the audience most like? What would be most valuable for the audience? How does the proposed format ensure the audience get the most value from this topic?]			
Proposed number of speakers and roles within session	[Describe how many speakers you would like within the session, and what you would like them to do. For example, you might specify: 1. One main keynote speaker, with one secondary speaker, followed by both participating in audience Q+A 2. Three very brief presentation followed by a panel discussion 3. Three consecutive short presentations and then a panel discussion with audience Q+A at the end 4. A facilitated workshop – including a briefing and then input from each table 5. Etc			
Requested Speakers	Who is this speaker?	What is their intended role within the proposed format (what would you like this speaker to do)?	What topics, issues, or ideas would you like this speaker to address?	Who would be the best substitute if this person is not available?
Most preferred speaker:	[Insert the name of a person]	[Are they delivering a keynote, participating in a panel, taking audience questions, etc.?)	[What do you want them to focus on? Topics to address and any subjects to avoid?]	[Insert the name of a person]
Second preferred speaker:	[Insert the name of a person]	[Are they delivering a keynote, participating in a panel, taking audience questions, etc.?)	[What do you want them to focus on? Topics to address and any subjects to avoid?]	[Insert the name of a person]
Third preferred speaker:	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]
Fourth preferred speaker:	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]
Fifth preferred speaker:	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]
Sixth preferred speaker:	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]
Seventh preferred speaker:	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]	[As above]

[To complete the template, please replace all text in square brackets]

It is proposed that each Session Group will:

1. Meet or discuss separately to develop their session no later than **the end of September** (each Session Group is to organise their own meeting, WALGA officers may be able to attend if requested);
2. Once agreed, complete and return the template to WALGA no later than **16 October 2026**;
3. Provide a brief (2 minute) summary of the proposed format at the **November Zone meeting** (which will provide an opportunity for discussion and any final refinement of the program across the sessions);
4. Liaise with WALGA and meet with the MC to finalise their session and brief speakers, etc. between **November and March**.

The session groups have been suggested based on Local Governments likely to have an interest in the topics. Delegates would be welcome to swap between sessions groups or be involved in multiple session groups, in the interest of developing the best possible program.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Trayning

Seconded: Shire of Merredin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone:

1. **Endorse the proposed Forum program design approach;**
2. **Appoint the member delegates to the Session Groups (allowing any swapping between groups by agreement between delegates);**
3. **Request Session Groups provide their completed template to the Executive Officer by 16 October 2026; and**
4. **Request Session Groups provide a summary of their proposed session at the November Zone meeting.**

CARRIED

10. WALGA STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE REPORTS

10.1. STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cr Stephen Strange

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Wyalkatchem

Seconded: Shire of Mukinbudin

That the State Councillor Report be received.

CARRIED

10.2. STATUS REPORT

Noted

Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update Last Provided	WALGA Contact
13 November 2025 Zone Agenda Item 16.2 Review of the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)	That the Great Eastern Country Zone: 1. Express its concern at the ongoing review of the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) without a timeline for completion or confirmation of the program's future structure or funding levels. 2. Request WALGA to advocate to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS) for: a. Public release of the CSRFF review's scope, commencement date and expected completion timeline; b. Confirmation of the program's continuation and funding levels beyond the review period, with increases to reflect inflation, demand, and regional construction costs; c. Commitment that CSRFF will remain a merit-based, transparent, and equitable program accessible to regional and metropolitan communities alike; and d. Urgent communication of future funding round dates to enable regional local governments and community clubs to plan projects effectively. 3. Request WALGA to highlight to the Minister that the lack of certainty around CSRFF is jeopardising the fruition of regional projects vital to community wellbeing, participation, and sustainability.	In July the CITS website was updated to advise that the review of the CSRFF and CNLP is being conducted between July and November 2026 ahead of funding rounds opening in February 2027. WALGA advocated strongly for meaningful sector consultation in the review as well as further information on the impact on current and future rounds. WALGA has agreed to lead Local Government consultation on behalf of CITS in July – August, including a short CITS survey and targeted workshops. An WALGA Members survey will gather additional insights to create a robust evidence base of Local Government feedback and inform the sector-wide response to the review and broader WALGA advocacy. WALGA will continue to engage with CITS on the review, including recommending ongoing engagement with Local Governments on the anticipated updated program guidelines and reopening of funding rounds in February 2027. The sector consultation and data analysis undertaken by WALGA will inform ongoing advocacy relating to CSRFF, CNLP and community infrastructure investment. CSRFF funding has been maintained at \$12 million per annum across the forward estimates in the 2026-27 State Budget.	August 2026	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039
13 February 2025 Zone Agenda Item 14.1 WA Telstra Automatic Transfer	That the Great Eastern Country Zone requests WALGA organise a roundtable with WALGA, Telstra, Department of Fire and Emergency Services and Department of Primary Industries and Regional	Negotiations with Telstra / InfraCo and the State Government through DPIRD are continuing with the objective of implementing clear backup generator deployment	June 2026	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure iduncan@walga.asn.au

Unit Pilot Deployment Program	Development to discuss the drafting of Community Support Agents Agreement for the implementation of the WA Telstra Automatic Transfer Unit Pilot Deployment Program.	arrangements in place for the 2026/27 high threat season. Progress has been made in relation to required qualifications and training for people to connect the generators to an ATU. Significant challenges remain regarding the indemnities sought by Telstra from Local Governments and / or the State Government.		9213 2031
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11. ZONE REPORTS

11.1. CHAIR REPORT

President Cr Tony Sachse

Welcome to our fourth meeting for 2026.

The Zone Executive met on 21st July 2026. The Minutes of the meeting are attached.

The Shire of Bruce Rock are hosting and providing the 10-minute presentation today.

Special Welcome to WALGA President Cr Mark Irwin. We look forward to your address and update on WALGA business.

We also have the Wheatbelt LUMEN Study Hubs presenting today.

Thank you also to all the Agency representatives for sending in their respective reports and to those who are attending today.

Many thanks to our Executive Officer Sam McCeod and Executive Assistant Habiba Farrag from WALGA for their great support to our Zone. Thanks again to the Shire of Bruce Rock for hosting us today.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Yilgarn

Seconded: Shire of Merredin

That the Zone Chair's report be received.

CARRIED

11.2. WHEATBELT DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DEMC)

President Cr Tony Sachse

Natalie Bell is now the District Emergency Management Advisor for the Wheatbelt District. She is filling the role for Shelby Robinson until February next year while she is on extended leave.

The last meeting of the Wheatbelt DEMC was an Annual Exercise, on **Wednesday 6 May 2026** from **10am-1pm**. The meeting and exercise related to the consequences of a prolonged water disruption across our region, and its impacts on communities and essential services. At the time of writing the minutes for this have not yet been distributed. There is a EM Webinar scheduled for Wednesday 26th August. This presentation is by Telstra who will provide insight on their Accessible Satellite Apps.

The Wheatbelt Operational Area Support Group (OASG)/ISG is now meeting on an as needed basis.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Narembeen

Seconded: Shire of Tammin

That the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee Report be received.

CARRIED

12. ZONE BUSINESS

12.1. MAJOR LAND TRANSACTION PROVISIONS – REGIONAL WORKFORCE HOUSING PROJECTS

By Shire of Narembeen

PURPOSE

To seek WALGA Great Eastern Country Zone support for advocacy to the State Government regarding amendment of the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996* to provide greater flexibility for local government-led workforce housing projects undertaken for a public purpose.

BACKGROUND

Rural and regional local governments across Western Australia are increasingly being required to take a direct role in facilitating housing delivery due to ongoing housing shortages, workforce attraction challenges and limited private sector development in smaller communities.

Many local governments are now investing significant capital into workforce housing projects to support the attraction and retention of essential personnel including teachers, police officers, health professionals, emergency service personnel and local government employees.

Under the current legislative framework, workforce housing projects may become subject to the Major Land Transaction provisions contained within section 3.59 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Whilst the policy intent of the Major Land Transaction provisions is understood and supported, the provisions can unintentionally capture relatively modest workforce housing projects in regional communities.

The Major Land Transaction threshold is currently the lesser of \$2,000,000 or 10% of a local government's annual operating expenditure. For many rural and regional local governments, the applicable threshold is therefore significantly less than \$2,000,000.

For example, a local government with annual operating expenditure of approximately \$9 million would be captured at a threshold of approximately \$900,000. In today's construction market, this may equate to as few as two workforce dwellings.

As a consequence, local governments seeking to deliver housing for teachers, police officers, health professionals, local government employees and other essential workers can quickly become subject to Major Land Transaction requirements despite the project being undertaken for a clear public purpose and without any commercial profit motive.

A practical challenge is that workforce housing projects are often captured because a long-term lease is considered a form of land transaction or disposal under the legislation, notwithstanding the local government retains ownership of both the land and dwellings.

In many cases, the local government is not selling land, divesting assets or undertaking a commercial venture. Rather, it is investing significant capital and assuming financial risk to deliver housing outcomes that support essential government services and broader community wellbeing.

DISCUSSION

The current housing shortage across regional Western Australia has resulted in local governments increasingly partnering with State Government agencies and other stakeholders to deliver workforce housing solutions.

Recent examples include Government Regional Officers Housing (GROH), key worker housing initiatives and regional workforce accommodation projects being pursued by individual local governments and regional groupings such as NEWROC, ROEROC, WEROC and 4WDL.

There may be merit in reviewing the exemption provisions contained within the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996* to determine whether local government workforce housing projects delivered for a public purpose should be afforded separate consideration (be exempt) from Major Land Transaction Provisions).

Any such amendment could be limited to projects where:

- The primary purpose is workforce attraction and retention;
- The housing supports essential government services or identified workforce shortages;
- The local government retains ownership of the land and housing assets;
- The project is not being undertaken for commercial profit; and
- The project demonstrably addresses housing market failure within regional communities.

Such an approach would continue to preserve transparency and accountability whilst reducing unnecessary administrative burden and supporting the delivery of regional housing outcomes.

SECRETARIAT COMMENT

WALGA recognises that lack of available housing is a significant constraint for regional Local Governments. As a result, a growing number of Local Governments are increasingly compelled to provide housing to attract and retain key workers.

Further investigation may identify opportunities to reduce red tape for local governments. This may be suitable in circumstances where key projects meet pre-determined public purpose criteria.

In addition, it would be reasonable to review the value thresholds prescribed for Major Land Transactions to consider whether they reflect current property and construction values, and future market growth. While the tender threshold prescribed in the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996* was increased in 2020, values prescribed for Major Land Transactions and Major Trading Undertakings have not been adjusted since 2011. Some values prescribed for exempt disposals of property have not been increased since the regulations were introduced in 1996.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Narembeen

Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

That the WALGA Great Eastern Country Zone:

- 1. Supports advocacy to the Minister for Local Government and to the Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works seeking a review of the Major Land Transaction exemption provisions contained within the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996* as they relate to local government-led workforce housing projects undertaken for a public purpose.**
- 2. Requests WALGA State Council investigate and advocate for regulatory amendments which recognise workforce housing projects delivered by local governments to support essential services, workforce attraction and workforce retention in regional Western Australia.**
- 3. Requests WALGA engage with the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety and relevant State Government agencies to identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers impacting delivery of local government workforce housing projects.**

CARRIED

12.2. RURAL HEALTH ADVOCACY UPDATE

By Hannah Godsave, Manager Community Policy

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This work aligns to [WALGA Advocacy Position 3.2.2 Rural and Remote Healthcare Services](#):

The Western Australian and Australian Governments are responsible for ensuring that all West Australians have equitable access to primary healthcare services, regardless of their location. Local Governments should not have to step in to support the provision of these services for their communities.

- 1. WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to address the systemic failures in the provision of rural and remote primary healthcare services, including through:
 - a. the development and implementation of adequate, appropriate and sustainable funding models**

- b. incentivising rural and remote healthcare workforce recruitment and retention.*
- 2. Local Governments should be reimbursed for costs incurred to support the provision of primary healthcare services until sustainable funding and workforce models are in place.*

September 2025

COMMENT

WALGA continues to advocate for measures to address the cost impost borne by Local Governments supporting GP services. The [WALGA 2025 General Practice Support Survey Report](#) (the Report) identified that in 2024-25, West Australian Local Governments incurred over \$9.5 million in costs associated with supporting GP services.

WALGA is progressing advocacy efforts to advance the priorities and strategic objectives of the revised [Rural and Remote Healthcare Services Advocacy Position](#) endorsed by State Council in September 2025 across three related streams:

- raising awareness of the scale of support Local Governments are providing and that this is not a Local Government responsibility, including in:
 - meetings with State and Federal Ministers, Members of Parliament and the National Rural Health Commissioner
 - discussions with key health stakeholders including key State Government agencies
 - a submission and evidence provided to the [Commonwealth Inquiry into rural, regional and remote Medicare access and funding](#)
 - presenting at the Local Government Rural Health Funding Alliance Canberra Session in June 2026
 - sharing insights and progress with ALGA and Local Government Associations, including sharing the WALGA survey methodology to support the collection of nationally comparable data.
- calling for sector reimbursement, including the \$9.5 million per annum reimbursement fund ask within the WALGA 2026-27 [Federal](#) and [State](#) Budget Submissions
- facilitating cross-sector collaboration with health organisations to develop and advocate for sustainable service and funding model reforms that would reduce or remove the need for Local Government support and identifying opportunities to engage with the Commonwealth and State Governments' strategic reform direction.

Building on the existing partnership with Rural Health West, WALGA has brought together key health organisations to investigate practical, WA focussed alternative service and funding models. This approach also provides joint advocacy opportunities to increase the reach and impact of WALGA advocacy. The group provides a strong foundation for the development of sustainable, system-wide policy solutions responsive to the needs of communities, service providers and government stakeholders. The group includes: the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners WA, Australian Medical Association WA Rural Doctors Group, Health Consumers' Council WA, and Curtin University Medical School. The work has also been informed by input from WA Country Health Service, the WA Primary Health Alliance and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer. The work has also been informed by WALGA's discussions with the National Rural Health Commissioner in late July.

The group's findings and recommendations will be shared and tested with Members ahead of finalisation. WALGA is also considering mechanisms to support ongoing Member

engagement and collaboration on this issue, including opportunities for participation in advocacy activities.

WALGA welcomes ongoing Member engagement and collaboration on this important issue. Local Governments are uniquely placed to demonstrate the real community and human impacts of this issue, which is critical to ensuring advocacy is credible, meaningful and effective.

Noted

12.3. H5 BIRD FLU UPDATE

WALGA has prepared an item for noting, available in the [State Council Agenda](#) (item 10.6) which provides an update on WALGA's activities to support Local Government Members since the outbreak.

Noted

12.4. ZONE MUTUAL AID MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

By Catherine Feeney, LEMA Implementation Project Officer, and Sam McLeod, Zone Executive Officer

At the February meeting, the Zone agreed to a simplified process to renew and note the long standing in-principle agreement intended to encourage the voluntary provision of mutual aid between Local Government members in times of emergency and post-incident recovery. Several Zones have established similar mutual aid arrangements.

The Zone previously adopted a standing Mutual Aid Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as a non-binding framework to support cooperation between member Local Governments during emergencies and post incident recovery.

The MOU does not create legal or financial obligations and preserves CEO discretion regarding the provision of any assistance, subject to local capacity and operational priorities.

Instead of formal signing and ratification, the Zone is requested to reaffirm a general commitment to the principles in the MOU. This reaffirmation is proposed to occur prior to the high-threat season to maintain awareness and readiness.

Following the Zone's resolution, each member Local Government is each invited to endorse the principles outlined in the MOU.

The purpose of Council endorsement is to acknowledge support for the principles of cooperation and ensure broad awareness of the MOU. WALGA has also prepared a pro-forma draft Council item template for inclusion in upcoming Council meeting papers for this purpose.

Importantly, decisions regarding the provision of personnel, plant, equipment or services remain the operational decisions of the Chief Executive Officer.

ATTACHMENTS

- GECZ MOU for Mutual Aid 2026
- MOU for Mutual Aid - Draft Agenda Item Template

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Yilgarn
Seconded: Shire of Narembeen

That the WALGA Great Eastern Country Zone:

- 1. Notes and reaffirms commitment to the principles expressed in the Memorandum of Understanding for Mutual Aid in Emergencies and Post-Incident Recovery; and**
- 2. Encourages Zone members to:**
 - a. Present the MOU for the consideration of its Council; and**
 - b. Consider integrating the MOU into its Local Emergency Management Arrangements.**

CARRIED

12.5. REQUEST TO PRESENT – DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, TOURISM AND SPORT (CITS)

The Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS) is responsible for supporting and growing Western Australia's creative industries, tourism, sport and active recreation sectors. The Department works in partnership with government, industry and community stakeholders to deliver social, cultural and economic benefits across the State. CITS is interested in engaging further with Local Governments through the Zones.

For those Zones that are interested, the presentation will provide an overview of CITS, including its responsibilities, strategic priorities and key areas of focus. The session will explore the Department's role in supporting communities across Western Australia and highlight opportunities for engagement and collaboration between CITS and Local Governments. The presentation will conclude with a question-and-answer session, providing Zone members with the opportunity to discuss matters of interest relevant to their communities and regions.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Shire of Merredin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone supports a presentation from the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS) at a future Zone meeting and that questions be provided to the WALGA Secretariat prior to the CITS representative attending the Zone meeting.

CARRIED

12.6. CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

Nil.

13. WALGA STATE COUNCIL AGENDA

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

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

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

13.1. RETIREMENT OF ADVOCACY POSITIONS ACHIEVED BY REFORM – STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.1

By Felicity Morris, Manager Governance and Procurement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA has been undertaking a process of reviewing and updating Advocacy Positions.
- Five Advocacy Positions within Section 2 (Governance and Organisational Services) of the [Advocacy Position Manual](#) have been reviewed, with a recommendation to retire these Positions as their intended outcomes have been achieved through legislative changes.
- The Governance Advisory Group considered these positions at their meeting held on 22 July 2026 and recommends the retirement of these positions to State Council.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report recommends that the below items be retired from the existing WALGA Advocacy Positions Manual.

2.5.17 – Clear Lease Requirements for Candidate and Vote Eligibility

The Local Government sector supports reforms to prevent the use of 'sham leases' in Council elections, including:

1. *Requiring a minimum lease period of 12 months for anyone to register a person to vote or run for Council;*
2. *Making home-based businesses ineligible to register a person to vote or run for Council because any residents are already eligible voter(s) for that address;*
3. *Clarifying the minimum criteria for leases eligible to register a person to vote or run for Council; and*
4. *Publishing the basis of eligibility for each candidate (e.g. type of property and suburb of property), including in the candidate pack for electors.*

2.5.19 Re-Counts

The Local Government sector supports the introduction of standard processes for vote re-counts if there is a very small margin (e.g. 10 or fewer votes) between

candidates, inclusive of Regulations that specify the circumstances in which the Returning Officer must arrange for some or all of the votes to be re-counted.

2.5.27 – Annual Review of Certain Employee's Performance

Section 5.38 of the Local Government Act 1995 should be deleted, or amended so there is only a specific requirement for Council to conduct the Chief Executive Officer's annual performance review.

2.5.33 – Vexatious and Frivolous Complainants

A statutory provision should be developed, permitting a Local Government to:

- 1. Enable discretion to refuse to further respond to a complainant where the CEO of the Local Government is of the opinion that the complaint is trivial, frivolous or vexatious or is not made in good faith, or has been determined to have been previously properly investigated and concluded, similar to the terms of section 18 of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971.*
- 2. Provide for a complainant, who receives a Local Government discretion to refuse to deal with that complainant, to refer the Local Government's decision for third party review.*
- 3. Enable Local Government discretion to declare a member of the public a vexatious or frivolous complainant for reasons, including abuse of process; harassing or intimidating an individual, Elected Member or employee of the Local Government; or unreasonably interfering with the operations of the Local Government.*

2.6 Group Ticket Voting

The Local Government sector supports the removal of group ticket voting from the Legislative Council electoral system, and supports reforms modelled on the Senate reforms of 2016.

BACKGROUND

The Governance Advisory Group currently oversees approximately 100 Advocacy Positions on a wide range of issues. As part of a comprehensive review program, the WALGA Governance team is assessing these positions to identify opportunities to streamline and strengthen existing Advocacy Positions, while also updating or retiring those that have become outdated or superseded. At the meeting held on 22 July 2026, the Governance Advisory Group agreed to recommend to State Council the retirement of the positions outlined in this report.

COMMENT

Following recent legislative changes, particularly the ongoing reforms to the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act), several positions have been identified for retirement as their objectives have been achieved.

2.5.17 – Clear Lease Requirements for Candidate and Vote Eligibility

This Position was adopted at the February 2022 Special State Council meeting.

Amendments to the Act and *Local Government (Elections) Regulations 1997* have achieved the following:

- Requirement of a right of occupation for a period of 12 months prior to an enrolment eligibility claim (Section 4.32(3)).
- Occupation of a residence does not constitute occupation for the basis of enrolment, with the effect that home based businesses are ineligible, while residents are enrolled on the residents' roll (Elections r.10A(2)(a)).

- Detailed minimum requirements for leases to constitute a basis for enrolment (Section 4.23, Elections r.10A, 12B, 12C).
- The basis of enrolment eligibility (resident, owner or occupier) must be identified by the Returning Officer and included in the information that must be published about each candidate for election (Elections r.29A).

Given that all elements of Position Statement 2.5.17 have been addressed through legislative reform, it is recommended that this Advocacy Position be retired.

2.5.19 Re-Counts

This Position was adopted at the December 2023 State Council meeting.

Amendments to the *Local Government (Elections) Regulations 1997* in 2025 introduced a new Part 12D, establishing requirements for mandatory recounts if the margin is less than a defined re-count threshold.

Given that the objective of the Position has now been achieved, it is recommended that this policy position be retired.

2.5.27 – Annual Review of Certain Employee's Performance

Section 5.38 of the Act has been amended to specify that the Local Government (Council) is responsible for the Chief Executive Officer's performance review, while the CEO is responsible for ensuring that the performance of each other employee for more than 1 year is reviewed.

When the *Local Government Amendment Act 2023* takes full effect, Section 5.38 will be further amended to expand on the process required for a CEO performance review and remove all references to employees other than the CEO.

As the required change has been achieved it is recommended that Position 2.5.27 be retired.

2.5.33 – Vexatious and Frivolous Complainants

This Position was adopted at the March 2019 State Council meeting.

On 1 January 2026, amendments to the Act took effect inserting a new Part 5, Division 11 – Restricting communication about complaints.

The new provisions:

- Provide CEOs with the authority to restrict communication with complainants in certain circumstances, including where the complaint has been responded to, would divert substantial resources, is vexatious, misconceived, frivolous or without substance.
- Provide a mechanism for review and oversight by the Local Government Inspector.

Considering these legislative changes, it is proposed that that Position 2.5.33 be retired, as the intent of the Advocacy Position has been substantially addressed through the Act.

2.6 Group Ticket Voting

This Position was adopted at the June 2021 State Council meeting.

Amendments to the *Electoral Act 1907* have implemented reforms that abolish group ticket voting and introduce optional preferential voting for the Legislative Council. These changes

were affected through legislative amendments, including the removal of Part IV (ss. 104–133) by the *Electoral Amendment (Finance and Other Matters) Act 2023*.

Given that the objective of Position 2.6 has now been achieved, it is recommended that this Advocacy Position be retired.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council retire the following Advocacy Positions:

1. 2.5.17 – Clear Lease Requirements for Candidate and Vote Eligibility
2. 2.5.19 – Re-Counts
3. 2.5.27 – Annual Review of Certain Employee's Performance
4. 2.5.33 – Vexatious and Frivolous Complainants
5. 2.6 – Group Ticket Voting

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Tammin

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

CARRIED

13.2. CIRCULAR ECONOMY ADVOCACY POSITION – STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.2

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A new Advocacy Position on circular economy is proposed.
- To focus future advocacy, a draft Advocacy Position was developed for sector feedback, supported by a [Background Paper](#).
- The paper identified the potential that transitioning to a circular economy has to reduce cost of living pressures, maximise use of resources and reduce a range of environmental impacts associated with the manufacture, distribution and post consumption management of products.
- The Advocacy Position was endorsed by the Municipal Waste Advisory Council at its final meeting on 18 June 2026 and noted by the Environment, Planning and Waste Advisory Group at its 13 July 2026 meeting.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item aligns with WALGA's Strategic Pillars:

- **Influence:** Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government and lead policy development for the Local Government sector.
- **Support:** Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A new policy position on circular economy is proposed:

1. *Local Government supports the principle of a circular economy and recognises its potential to:*
 - a. *maximise the value and use of resources through a products life cycle*
 - b. *minimise environmental and financial impacts associated with the manufacture, distribution and post consumption management of products.*
2. *Local Government calls on the:*
 - a. *State Government to undertake a detailed study to determine how Western Australia can move toward a circular economy.*
 - b. *Australian Government to:*
 - i. *establish and maintain a regulated product stewardship framework for products entering the Australian market*
 - ii. *set standards to ensure products are designed to be durable, reused, repaired and recycled at their highest value*
 - iii. *implement Right to Repair Legislation, including incentives, training and cost-effective insurance options.*
 - c. *Australian and State Governments to take a collaborative approach to:*
 - i. *identify and remove legislative barriers to enable more circular approaches*
 - ii. *streamline Government approvals processes and facilitate innovation*
 - iii. *embed circular procurement practices across Government*
 - iv. *support and provide incentives for recovered materials infrastructure and market development for priority materials across Western Australia.*

BACKGROUND

Circular economy is defined as 'an economic strategy that maintains the value of materials for as long as possible and ensures materials are used efficiently across all phases of their life cycle'. WALGA [submissions](#) on the review of the State Waste Strategy identified that an overall State Government position on a circular economy for Western Australia is needed, recommending that State Government, in consultation with Local Governments, develop a position and plan for a circular economy in Western Australia which includes consideration of costs, benefits and options.

WALGA's [submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Opportunities in the Circular Economy](#) further highlighted priority action areas to promote circularity. This included the important role of procurement, the need for quality assurance and market development for recovered materials, specific programs and incentives to shift consumer behaviours, the Right to Repair and a mandated product stewardship framework.

A defined circular economy position and plan is required to back up the vision and identify the role of each sector in achieving a circular economy, both nationally and in Western Australia. There has been only limited discussion outside of the waste management context on what a circular economy is and its potential.

COMMENT

In April 2026, WALGA released the [Circular Economy Advocacy Position Background Paper](#). The Paper outlines that transitioning to a circular economy has the potential to reduce cost of living pressures, maximise use of resources and reduce a range of environmental impacts associated with the manufacture, distribution and post consumption management of products.

In drafting the draft Circular Economy Advocacy Position, WALGA drew on international, national and local circular economy policies and activities to identify the barriers and opportunities to move toward a circular economy in WA. The Advocacy Position outlines the actions needed from all levels of Government to change legislation and policies where required, put in place relevant incentives and lead by example.

Consultation on the Paper and draft Advocacy Position was carried out from 20 April to 15 May 2026. Responses were received from 10 Local Governments, five Metropolitan and five Regional. Of the submissions received, eight supported the Advocacy Position without amendments and two supported the Advocacy Position with minor suggested changes, which have been incorporated.

WALGA updated the Advocacy Position following feedback from the Municipal Waste Advisory Council at its 18 June 2026 meeting. The Advocacy Position was noted by the Environment, Planning and Waste Advisory Group at its 13 July 2026 meeting.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the following new Circular Economy Advocacy Position:

1. *Local Government supports the principle of a circular economy and recognises its potential to:*
 - a. *maximise the value and use of resources through a products life cycle; and*
 - b. *minimise environmental and financial impacts associated with the manufacture, distribution and post consumption management of products.*
2. *Local Government calls on the:*
 - a. *State Government to undertake a detailed study to determine how Western Australia can move toward a circular economy.*
 - b. *Australian Government to:*
 - i. *establish and maintain a regulated product stewardship framework for products entering the Australian market;*
 - ii. *set standards to ensure products are designed to be durable, reused, repaired and recycled at their highest value; and*
 - iii. *implement Right to Repair Legislation, including incentives, training and cost-effective insurance options.*
 - c. *Australian and State Governments to take a collaborative approach to:*
 - i. *identify and remove legislative barriers to enable more circular approaches;*
 - ii. *streamline Government approvals processes and facilitate innovation;*
 - iii. *embed circular procurement practices across Government; and*
 - iv. *support and provide incentives for recovered materials infrastructure and market development for priority materials across Western Australia.*

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Mukinbudin
Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

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

CARRIED

13.3. OTHER STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

Zone Delegates are invited to raise for discussion, questions or decision any of the items in the State Council Agenda, including the items for noting, Advisory Group Reports or the Key Activity Reports.

14. EMERGING ISSUES

14.1. PUBLIC HEALTH ACT

Shire of Koorda

Moved: Shire of Yilgarn
Seconded: Shire of Bruce Rock

That the Great Eastern Country Zone requests WALGA's advice on the resources available to Local Governments to assist in the preparation of local laws under the new Public Health Act framework.

CARRIED

14.2. COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLIES

Shire of Mt Marshall

Moved: Shire of Mt Marshall
Seconded: Shire of Dowerin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee write a letter on Community Water Supplies Partnership Program and Agricultural Areas/Strategic Community Water Supply Programs on future and recurrent funding.

CARRIED

15. NEXT MEETING

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 27 October 2026 commencing at 8:00am, via MTeams.

The next Great Eastern Country Zone meeting will be held on Thursday, 12 November 2026 commencing at 9:30am. This meeting will be hosted by the **Shire of Dowerin**.

16. CLOSURE

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:43pm.