

Great Eastern Country Zone Minutes 23 April 2026

**Hosted by the Shire of Cunderdin
Commenced at 9:30am**

ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following items are the Zone's priority issues, as resolved at the February 2024 Zone meeting:

- Regional Health Services to include:
 - Hospitals
 - Aged Care
 - Future of Nurse Practitioner Service
- St John Ambulance Service – Impact on Volunteers and the provision of the service generally.
- Regional Subsidiaries
- Transport – Road Network
- Telecommunications
- Education
- Review of GROH Housing and Regional Housing issues
- Waste Management
- Agricultural Land Use

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1. OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1. OPENING

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:32am.

Note: A special arrangement to provide delegates with an option to attend virtually was made available in the Notice of Meeting due to current instability in local fuel availability.

Tracking of attendance is necessary to ensure a Special Majority for item 9.4.1.

This arrangement is expected to be a temporary measure.

1.2. ATTENDANCE

Note: (e) indicates electronic 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 Cr Jo Fulwood, observer Mr Stuart Hobley, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Dowerin	President Cr Darrel Hudson Deputy President, Cr Robert Trepp, deputy voting delegate Mrs Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Kellerberrin	Cr Emily Ryan Mr Raymond Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer, voting delegate (e)
Shire of Kondinin	Cr Toni Smeed (e)
Shire of Koorda	Mr Zac Donovan, Chief Executive Officer, deputy voting delegate
Shire of Merredin	President Cr Donna Crook (e) Mr Craig Watts, Chief Executive Officer, deputy delegate (e)
Shire of Mount Marshall	President Cr Tony Sachse
Shire of Mukinbudin	President Cr Gary Shadbolt (e) Ms Tanika McLennan, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting (e)

Shire of Narembeen	President Cr Holly Cusack Deputy President, Cr Hannah Bald Ms Rebecca McCall, Chief Executive Officer, deputy voting delegate
Shire of Nungarin	President Cr Pippa de Lacy Mr David Nayda, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Tammin	President Cr Charmaine Thomson (<i>e</i>) 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 Westonia	President Cr Mark Crees Ms Jasmine Geier, A/Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Wyalkatchem	President Cr Christy Petchell Mr Tom Kettle, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Yilgarn	President Cr Bryan Close Cr Donna Newbury Mr Peter Clarke, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
GUESTS	
WALGA State Council	Deputy President of WALGA, President Chris Antonio
Local Government Inspectorate	Mr Tony Brown, Local Government Inspector Mr Kenneth Dobson, General Manager Investigations and Complaints
Main Roads WA	Ms Belinda Stopic, General Manager of Regional Operations Mr Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt Mr Matin Lodge, Main Roads Consultant Ms Liz Davis, Stakeholder Engagement Manager
Water Corporation	Ms Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer & Stakeholder – Goldfields & Agricultural Region Ms Sandy Power, Senior Advisor – Customer & Stakeholder
Wheatbelt Development Commission	Ms Renee Manning, A/Chief Executive Officer
Telstra	Ms Eva Colic, Regional Engagement Manager Mr Kevin Donnellan, Regional Network Advisor

WALGA

Mr Sam McLeod, Manager Commercial Services
Ms Habiba Farrag, State Council Governance Officer
Ms Conor Macgill, Senior Policy Advisor Waste Management
Ms Tracey Peacock, Road Safety Advisor (*e*)

1.3. APOLOGIES

MEMBERS

Shire of Dowerin	Cr Ashley Jones
Shire of Kondinin	Deputy President, Cr Beverley Gangell Mr Bruce Wright, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Koorda	President Cr Jannah Stratford Deputy President, Cr Gary Greaves
Shire of Mt Marshall	Deputy President, Cr Nicholas Gillett Mr Ben McKay, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Nungarin	Cr Gary Coumbe
Shire of Westonia	Deputy President, Cr Ross Della Bosca
Shire of Wyalkatchem	Deputy President, Cr Mischa Stratford

GUESTS

CBH Group	Ms Kellie Todman, Manager Governance and Industry Relations Ms Emma Haak, Planning and Approvals Lead
Regional Development Australia WA	Mr Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development
Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee	Ms Shelby Robinson, District Emergency Management Advisor

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr Lachlan Hunter MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt
Mr Peter Rundle MLA, Member for Roe
Hon Melissa Price MP, Member for Durack
Mr Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor
Hon Steve Martin MLC

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.

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 Cunderdin made a presentation at this meeting.

The June meeting will be hosted in a hybrid format, with delegates welcome to attend at WALGA's office in West Leederville, or virtually via MS Teams. There will be no member host for that meeting.

The Shire of Bruce Rock will host the August meeting and is invited to make a host presentation.

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. SPEAKERS FOR THE APRIL ZONE MEETING

6.1.1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR

Tony Brown, Local Government Inspector, provided a briefing on the commencement of the Local Government Inspectorate as well as his priorities for 2026.

Noted

6.1.2. MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Belinda Stopic, General Manager of Regional Operations, provided a briefing in response to the Zone's letter to the Hon Rita Saffioti MLA (Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport) regarding Great Eastern Highway. Mr Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt and Mr Matin Lodge, Main Roads Consultant, both provided supporting presentations and supporting input.

Noted

6.1.3. TELSTRA

Eva Colic, Telstra Regional Engagement Manager and Mr Kevin Donnellan, Regional Network Advisor, provided an update on mobile network upgrades, co-investment programs, satellite to mobile and network resilience and ATU Program.

Noted

Cr Donna Crook left the meeting at 11:34am and did not return.

7. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Members of Parliament Protocols

Any Members of Federal and State Government in attendance are invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to the Zone. Members of Parliament are invited to make a brief (approx. 5-10 minute) address, with equivalent time left for questions from delegates wherever possible.

Any Members of Federal and State Government in attendance are invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to the Zone.

Noted

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 attached to the Agenda for the Zone.

Noted

8.2. WHEATBELT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Renee Manning, A/Chief Executive Officer

Renee Manning provided a brief update to the Zone.

Noted

8.3. WATER CORPORATION

Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer and Stakeholder

A brief presentation was provided to the Zone.

Noted

8.4. DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Shelby Robinson, District Emergency Management Advisor

Shelby Robinson was an apology for this meeting.

Noted

9. MINUTES

9.1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2026

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on 12 February 2026 were previously circulated to Member Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Great Eastern Country Zone held on 12 February 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 12 FEBRUARY 2026

9.2.1. UPDATE ON CORRESPONDENCE

Since the 12 February Great Eastern Country Zone meeting, the Zone has received the following correspondence.

- Response from the Deputy Premier was received on 2 April 2026 in reply to the Letter on the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network (provided with the agenda).
- Response from the Office of the Deputy Premier was received on 16 April 2026 in reply to the Letter regarding the Great Eastern Highway (provided with the agenda).

- No response has been received to the Office of the Hon Sabine Winton MLA in relation to attending an upcoming Zone meeting.
- A letter was sent to President Karen Chappel AM JP to thank her for her service as WALGA President.
- An update on responses received relating to the Delegation was provided separately.

Noted

9.3. MINUTES OF THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2026

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 24 March 2026 were provided as an attachment.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Nungarin
Seconded: Shire of Cunderdin

That the Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 24 March 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2026

9.4.1. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONE CONSTITUTION

ATTACHMENTS

1. Constitution with proposed amendments (clean formatting as adopted)

An outline of proposed updates to the Zone Constitution were provided to the Zone at the 12 February 2026 meeting, requesting any feedback or comments to be provided to the Zone Executive Officer by Monday, 9 March 2026.

No feedback was received and no changes have been made to the documents presented at the February meeting.

As proposed at the 12 February 2026 meeting, the Zone Constitution is proposed to be updated with the following amendments summarised below:

Section	Nature of Proposed Change
1. Name	- Added short form name of "Great Eastern Country Zone".
2. Interpretation	- Removed redundant references.
3. Objects	(No change)

Section	Nature of Proposed Change
4. Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added reference to Members typically being able to appoint two delegates, unless otherwise determined by the Zone.
5. Change of Membership Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removed redundant reference to withdrawal of membership from WALGA (this is more appropriately in the WALGA Constitution)
6. Meetings – Ordinary and Special	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added “typically” before “held in person”, to allow for occasional meetings held virtually or using a hybrid format (e.g. Perth meeting) if necessary. - Removed reference to a specific day of the week for meetings - Added new section on quorum to provide for meeting to reduce ambiguity. This is based on the Zone’s Standing Orders. - Removed specific reference to “Meeting Procedures”, replaced with “any rules and practices of the Zone as adopted from time to time”. In practice, meeting procedures can still be adopted/used as required. A copy of the current Meeting Procedures is attached to this item.
7. Zone President/Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added “Chair” as alternative term, given this term is now generally favoured. - Minor change to express that President/Chair is to have duties which are similar to those of a President of a Local Government.
8. Deputy President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added “Deputy Chair” alternative language as for Zone Chair
9. Representative to State Council and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election of State Councillors and Deputy State Council is dealt with under Clause 16 of WALGA’s Constitution. Therefore, these clauses are proposed to be amended to simply reference WALGA’s Constitution but retain reference to State Councillor to report State Council meeting outcomes back to the Zone.
10. Deputy Representative to State Council	
11. Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplified language that Zone and Zone’s Executive Committee may make decisions which the Executive Officer is to progress or implement.
12. Zone Executive Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplified that Executive Committee can consist of delegates as the Zone determines (as occurred at the last election) - Added reference to Executive Committee engaging with the Executive Officer on the implementation of the Zone’s decisions, actions, or initiatives - Added that Executive Committee can determine its procedures.
15. Zone Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reworded previous clause about authority for the Zone being ultimately through decisions at Zone meetings.
16. Election Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minor rewording to references to holding elections in accordance with the Zone’s practices, “having regard to the general principles of the Local Government Act” to avoid need to apply prescriptive details in Act (e.g. preferential vote count procedures, backfilling, etc.).
17. Vacating of Office	(No change)
17 Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added general clause about Zone may utilise funds for any purpose in best interests of the members of the Zone
19. Subscriptions	(No change)
20 Banking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reworded to generally require Executive Office to establish and maintain a banking facility to account for the Zone’s finances (rather than requiring an individual account).

Section	Nature of Proposed Change
	- Reworded that payments are only to be made as duly authorised and reported in accordance with the Zone or Executive Committee's requirements
21. Constitutional Disputes	(No change)
22. Dissolution	(No change)
23 Amendments to the Constitution (Generally)	- Provided for the Executive Officer to fix typographical errors in the Constitution, but is to notify Zone after doing so. - Fixed clause numbering - Repagination (appears as intended if "Tracked Changes" is not displayed) - Updated fonts and graphic to match WALGA meeting papers style - Deleted "Register of Powers, Authorities, Discretions and Duties" at appendix

At its last meeting, the Zone's Executive Committee resolved to recommend that the Zone adopt these amendments.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin
Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

That the Great Eastern Country Zone endorse the proposed changes to the Great Eastern Country Zone's Constitution.

CARRIED BY SPECIAL MAJORITY (UNANIMOUSLY)

9.4.2. RURAL AND REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The current challenges and uncertainty with fuel supply are causing additional pressures on members of the Wheatbelt community.

During any economic crisis or uncertainty, members of the community experience direct impacts on their mental health.

A range of resources are available to assist with challenges that occur from economic uncertainty. Proactively facilitating awareness and access to services can help to prevent or reduce the severity of the wellbeing impacts of an external crisis.

The Mental Health Commission can provide information about regional suicide prevention. The Commission contracts this work to local organisations and services.

Other services which may be available are provided below.

- [Wheatbelt Mental Health Services \(WACHS\)](#)
- [DPIRD Regional finance and counselling support](#)
- [National Centre for Farmer Health – WA Support Hub](#)
- [Rural Aid Counselling Service](#)

- [Men's Health & Wellbeing WA – Bloke's Book 2025](#)
- [Financial Counsellors Assoc WA – Service Directory](#)

The following organisations may also have regional services:

- [Holyoake: Free Alcohol, Drug & Mental Health Support In WA](#)
- [Hope Community Services Western Australia | We Are Here to Help](#)
- [Access Financial Independence and Financial Security | Anglicare WA](#)

Additionally, [Richmind WA](#) offers Mental Health First Aid Training.

The Zone could consider potential specific initiatives (such as a session at the Zone Conference) on support for mental health and wellbeing in the context of economic volatility and uncertainty.

Member Local Governments are welcome to suggest any initiatives they may already be undertaking or could lead to support all Zone members navigate this challenging period.

Noted

10. ZONE BUSINESS

10.1. REVIEW OF ZONE PRIORITIES

A survey was emailed to all Zone Delegates in late 2025 regarding Zone priorities. 17 responses were received, and an overview of the results is attached (Attachment 9).

The results largely support the current priorities, but it is suggested to slightly reorder and reword the priorities. The Executive Committee requested 'Energy' be added to the Zone priority related to transport, and for that Energy, Transport and Road Network priority to be moved to point number 2. The table below outlines the proposed update.

Current Order	Proposed Order
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Health Services to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hospitals ○ Aged Care ○ Future of Nurse Practitioner Service • St John Ambulance Service – Impact on Volunteers and the provision of the service generally. • Regional Subsidiaries • Transport – Road Network • Telecommunications • Education • Review of GROH Housing and Regional Housing issues • Waste Management • Agricultural Land Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Health Services to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hospitals ○ Aged Care ○ Future of Nurse Practitioner Service • Energy, Transport and Road Network (up) • Regional Housing and GROH (up) • Telecommunications (up) • Agricultural Land Use (up) • St John Ambulance Service • Education • Waste Management • Regional Subsidiaries

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Westonia

Seconded: Shire of Trayning

That the Great Eastern Country Zone endorse the updated Zone Priorities.

CARRIED

10.2. DELEGATION WORKSHOP

Following the Delegation Workshop on 23 February 2026, letters have been drafted and sent to the identified key priority stakeholders for the June Delegation.

A progress update was provided at the meeting.

The Zone discussed the aims, opportunities, and costs of the delegation, with reference to the work undertaken since June 2025 on the proposal.

Noted

10.3. ZONE CONFERENCE UPDATE

The Zone's Executive Committee is keen to initiate early planning for the 2027 Conference. At the 12 February 2026 Zone meeting, the Zone resolved to:

1. Open Expressions of Interest for Local Governments to host the 2027 Zone Conference;
2. Open Expressions of Interest for Zone Delegates to serve on the 2027 Zone Conference Planning Committee; and
3. That general comment is invited on potential 2027 Zone Conference themes, topics, and speakers.

No submissions were received from Zone members on proposed venues, themes, or nominations for involvement on a Conference Planning Committee.

The Executive Committee endorsed the following planning assumptions at the March meeting (these may be subject to change):

1. The Executive Committee will be responsible for overseeing the Conference.
2. The working date for the Conference be **Thursday, 11 March 2027**.
3. WALGA is to approach the **Shire of Cunderdin** as a **potential host** and report back to the Zone.

4. WALGA is to seek quotations from well-known MCs to assist with programming and structure much earlier in the planning process. Under this delivery model, the MC is to lead on developing the event programme, and WALGA will organise all supporting logistics in conjunction with the host Local Government. The quotations from the MC would then inform the Zone's budget.
5. The **working theme is "Growing the Wheatbelt in a Changing World"** – encompassing topics such as agronomic/economic/impacts of global politics; economic development (particularly ag-related); maintaining and supporting population centres; and mental health in the Wheatbelt.
6. Assume a welcome breakfast and informal sundowner (a one day programme).

Zone delegates suggested that mental health could be included as a session for the Conference, with potential to explore associated supporting/grant funding.

Noted

10.4. 2026-27 ZONE BUDGET – INITIAL CONSIDERATION

Current financial figures for 2025-26 indicates that there will be another underspend against the endorsed budget, and another resulting surplus. The Zone continues to maintain very substantial reserves (in excess of \$200,000) and does not incur substantial operating expenses.

In 2025-26, there have been opportunities for additional advocacy activities that were not contemplated in the original budget, and the Zone separately resolved to authorise additional expenditure to send a representative to recent meetings in Canberra.

The Zone's Executive Committee considered potential approaches to the 2026-27 draft budget, and has expressed a strong view towards maintaining strong reserves to provide flexibility for the future. While a waiver of subscriptions was considered, this risks the line item being inadvertently omitted from member's budgets for the subsequent year.

The Zone continues to explore a range of potential initiatives that could benefit all Zone members - especially where there may be opportunities to effectively engage with the State, Commonwealth Government, and private sector stakeholders to represent the interests of all members. The current working list of initiatives is as follows:

1. Perth Delegation (being delivered)
2. In-person training (delivered)
3. Subsidy for Local Government Convention attendance (not progressed)
4. A potential "Investment Prospectus" of items across the Zone to support seeking one-off Commonwealth and State funding commitments
5. Canberra/ALGA Delegation
6. Expanded 2027 Conference (external speakers etc. – being delivered)
7. Other professional development opportunities

8. Potential future shared grant-writing resource or initiative (to maximise future grant revenue)
9. Potential future study on borrowing against Local Government owned freehold land (e.g. to enable new housing)
10. Potential future study on maximising the reactivation/use of freight rail
11. Potential future initiatives related to primary healthcare in the regions
12. One-off Zone responses to crisis or emergency situations.

Some of the Zone's recent initiatives (such as providing a subsidy for online training every second year) have been somewhat complex and administratively time-consuming.

Due to the range of potential initiatives, it is therefore proposed to move towards a more high-level working budget, with broad allocations for different types of activities. Accordingly, the proposed elements of the 2026-27 budget proposed by the Secretariat are:

- Discontinue the e-learning subscription grant (administered every second year to Members who claim it). If the Zone wants to return funds to members, a direct one-off payment, recurring annual transfer, or reduction in subscription fees would be easier for members and WALGA to administer.
- Adjust (+5%) and round up honoraria paid to the Zone Chair (\$600 p.a.), State Councillor (\$500 p.a.), and Executive Committee members (\$300 p.a. each), to a total cost of \$2,300.
- Provide a larger working budget for the Zone Convention to provide for professional help in developing the programme and potential travel for keynote speakers. A quotation has informed this estimate.

If the Zone is agreeable, the resulting 2026-27 Zone's budget presented for approval in June would be broadly as below. Input and comment are welcome.

	BUDGET 2026-27	Comments for budget
Income	\$	
General Subscriptions (16@\$1,500)	24,000	<i>16 members x \$1500 each - unchanged</i>
Interest income	9,000	<i>4.5% interest on 200k TD</i>
Total Income	33,000	
Expenses		
Zone Expenses - Audit fees	1,890	<i>5% increase in audit fees of \$1800</i>
Zone Expenses - Ordinary Meetings	12,000	<i>Catering for zone meetings and provision for travel expenses – there has been some recent increase in catering costs</i>
Zone Initiatives - Advocacy	20,000	<i>General allowance for engagement initiatives</i>
Zone Initiative - Face to face training in the Zone	\$Nil	<i>One-off initiative delivered in 2025-26.</i>
Zone Initiatives - Conference	40,000	<i>Held every 2nd year - this estimate assumes a professional facilitator assists to develop programme, recruit speakers, etc.</i>

Zone Initiative - Rebate	\$Nil	<i>Propose to discontinue the specific training rebate (propose to replace with simple direct/default rebate to all members if the Zone wishes to return funds to members)</i>
Zone Representative - Honoraria	2,300	<i>5% increase assumed from prior year</i>
Total Expenses	76,190	
Profit / Loss	(\$43,190)	
Cash Reserves		
Opening Balance	209,092	
Movement	(\$43,190)	<i>It is considered very unlikely that all budget allocations would be fully expended</i>
Closing Balance	165,902	<i>Therefore, this projection is considered unlikely.</i>

Noted

10.5. CONSULTATION ON DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY POSITION

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WALGA is undertaking sector consultation on a revised draft Climate Change Advocacy Position.
- This draft position was developed following initial consultation, consideration by State Council in March 2025 and feedback from the Environment Policy Team of State Council.
- WALGA is seeking **Council endorsed feedback by 1 May 2026**.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WALGA's 2018 Climate Change [Policy Statement](#) and Advocacy Position state:

Local Government acknowledges:

- 1. The science is clear: Climate change is occurring and greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the dominant cause.*
- 2. Climate change threatens human societies and the Earth's ecosystems.*
- 3. Urgent action is required to reduce emissions, and to adapt to the impacts from climate change that are now unavoidable.*
- 4. A failure to adequately address this climate change emergency places an unacceptable burden on future generations.*

Local Government is committed to addressing climate change.

Local Government is calling for:

- 1. Strong climate change action, leadership and coordination at all levels of government.*
- 2. Effective and adequately funded Commonwealth and State Government climate change policies and programs.*

The draft Advocacy Position in the Consultation Paper is:

1. *Local Government acknowledges the risks associated with, and is committed to, addressing climate change.*
2. *WALGA calls on the Australian and Western Australian Governments to provide:*
 - a. *the necessary climate leadership, coordination and action to ensure an orderly transition to achieve emission reduction targets and address the impacts of climate change*
 - b. *dedicated funding, guidance and practical support to assist Local Governments to undertake emissions reduction and adaptation actions.*

ATTACHMENT

- The WALGA Climate Change Advocacy Position Consultation Paper is available [online](#).

BACKGROUND

Climate change, and related legislation, policy and action, have implications for many aspects of Local Governments' operations and services. More frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves, bushfires, extreme rainfall events and warming, rising sea levels are increasing the costs and complexity of delivering critical services, infrastructure and ensuring community wellbeing.

In 2018, State Council endorsed a [Climate Change Policy Statement](#) and advocacy position, following extensive sector consultation. Since this Advocacy Position was adopted there have been significant legislative, policy, technological and scientific changes, including:

- The national *Climate Change Act 2022* and the Western Australian Climate Change Bill 2023.
- The *Local Government Amendment Act 2023*, which expanded Western Australian Local Governments' general function under Part 3 s3.1(1A) of the *Local Government Act 1995* to:
 - a. to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the district; and
 - b. **to plan for, and to plan for mitigating, risks associated with climate change;** and
 - c. in making decisions, to consider potential long-term consequences and impacts on future generations.
- The release of the Australian Government's [National Climate Risk Assessment](#) and [National Adaptation Plan](#) in 2025.
- Escalation of the transition to renewable energy, uptake of electric vehicles and energy efficiency standards under the National Construction Code.
- Climate science and projections ([international](#), [national](#) and [WA specific](#)) have also become clearer regarding the risks posed by climate change and the need for action to address the consequential impacts.

COMMENT

Following initial consultation, consideration by State Council in March 2025 and feedback from the Environment Policy Team, WALGA has developed a revised, draft Climate Change Advocacy Position for Local Government feedback which is currently out for consultation with feedback due by 1 May 2026. WALGA has received feedback from some Councils and

understands a number of Councils will be considering this matter in April. Zone delegates are encouraged to take this item to their Councils.

The Central Country Zone passed a motion at its February 2026 meeting which included writing to all other zones highlighting its alternative Advocacy Position (proposed in March 2025). WALGA worked to incorporate the Central Country Zone feedback prior to the release of the Consultation Paper.

WALGA is seeking **Council endorsed feedback** on the draft Climate Change Advocacy Position by **COB Friday, 1 May 2026**. Feedback should be provided to environment@walga.asn.au.

Following consideration of this feedback a final draft Advocacy Position will be developed and provided to zones and State Council for consideration.

Noted

11. ZONE REPORTS

11.1. CHAIR REPORT

President Cr Tony Sachse

The Zone Chair's Report was attached to the Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Nungarin
Seconded: Shire of Bruce Rock

That the Zone Chair's report be received.

CARRIED

11.2. WHEATBELT DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DEMC)

President Cr Tony Sachse

The DEMC Report was attached to the Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Narembeen
Seconded: Shire of Yilgarn

That the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee Report be received.

CARRIED

11.3. WALGA ROADWISE

Tracey Peacock, Regional Road Safety Advisor

The WALGA Roadwise Report was attached to the Agenda.

Noted

12. WALGA STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE REPORTS

12.1. WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The WALGA President's Report was attached to the Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin
Seconded: Shire of Narembeen

That the WALGA President's Report be received.

CARRIED

12.2. STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cr Stephen Strange

Cr Toni Smeed left the meeting at 12:46pm and did not return.

Cr Mark Crees and Ms Jasmine Geier left the meeting at 12:53pm and did not return.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Wyalkatchem
Seconded: Shire of Bruce Rock

That the State Councillor Report be received.

CARRIED

12.3. STATUS REPORT

Noted

Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update Last Provided	WALGA Contact
<p>13 February 2025 Zone Agenda Item 14.1 WA Telstra Automatic Transfer Unit Pilot Deployment Program</p>	<p>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 Development to discuss the drafting of Community Support Agents Agreement for the implementation of the WA Telstra Automatic Transfer Unit Pilot Deployment Program.</p>	<p>Negotiations with Telstra / InfraCo and the State Government through DPIRD are continuing with the objective of implementing clear backup generator deployment arrangements in place for the 2026/27 high threat season.</p> <p>There remain challenges to agreeing on appropriate qualifications and training required for people to connect the generators to an ATU, the indemnity required to be provided to Telstra and principles for operationalizing the arrangements.</p>	<p>April 2026</p>	<p>Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure iduncan@walga.asn.au 9213 2031</p>
<p>12 February 2026 Zone Agenda Item 14.2 Status of Legislative Amendments Relating to the Rating of Miscellaneous Licences</p>	<p>That the Great Eastern Country Zone supports WALGA's ongoing advocacy in relation to the rateability of land subject to a miscellaneous licence, including to address any uncertainty related to definitions or proposed legislative amendments.</p>	<p>Advocacy position 2.1.18 was adopted by State Council in September 2025.</p> <p>Correspondence has been sent to the Premier and Minister for Local Government. Opposition parties have been briefed.</p> <p>The Bill has been deferred by the Legislative Council.</p> <p>Funding for the broad review of rating exemptions is included in the State Budget submission.</p> <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>April 2026</p>	<p>Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager, Member Services 9213 2051 kmartin@walga.asn.au</p>
<p>18 August 2025 Zoe Agenda Item 9.4.1 Local Government Elections – Four Year Terms, Two Yearly Election Cycle</p>	<p>That the Great Eastern Country Zone request that WALGA continues to advocate to the State Government to retain the current system of four-year terms with a two-year spill for Local Government elections</p>	<p>State Council endorsed a Discussion Paper for the purpose of sector consultation by Flying Minute on 20 January 2026.</p> <p>Sector consultation has been undertaken and an item will be included in the May State Council Agenda.</p>	<p>April 2026</p>	<p>Kirsty Martin, Executive Manager, Member Services 9213 2051 kmartin@walga.asn.au</p>

<p>13 November 2025 Zone Agenda Item 16.2 Review of the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)</p>	<p>That the Great Eastern Country Zone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>In November 2025, WALGA contacted the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS) and was advised that funding rounds for 2025-26 had been paused while a review of the programs was undertaken. Further information on the impact on current and future rounds was requested but not provided.</p> <p>WALGA wrote to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and CITS in December 2025.</p> <p>WALGA received a response from the Minister on 17 February, advising that investment in sporting infrastructure will focus on the delivery of the State Governments' PlayOn WA: 2030 by 2030 initiative and election commitments.</p> <p>WALGA is urgently seeking clarity regarding the review and the future of these funding programs and developing an advocacy and communications plan.</p> <p>To inform our advocacy, WALGA is working with Local Governments to understand the impacts of the funding review and uncertainty of future rounds.</p>	<p>April 2026</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039</p>
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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. PROTECTING COUNCIL MEMBER AND EMPLOYEE PRIVACY ADVOCACY POSITION – STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.1

By Meghan Dwyer, Governance Specialist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The South East Metropolitan Zone resolved to request WALGA advocate to amend s.5.95(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* to specify that the right to inspect Primary and Annual Returns (Returns) contained in the Register of Financial Interests under s.5.94(b) does not extend to the residential address of the relevant person.
- Returns may include residential addresses, which are then made publicly accessible, creating privacy and safety risks.
- Council Members and employees are increasingly reluctant to disclose residential addresses due to safety and security risks, demonstrating that current legislation no longer aligns with contemporary expectations of privacy.
- Recent parliamentary scrutiny of similar requirements for Members of Parliament led to recommendations to remove full residential address disclosures, which the Government supported.
- In addition to Returns, Council Members must also provide a residential address when making their declaration of office.
- It would be appropriate for a review of all public disclosure requirements under the *Local Government Act 1995* to occur to ensure that they remain contemporary, effective, and aligned with modern standards of accountability and personal security.
- The Governance Policy Team endorsed the proposed advocacy position at its meeting on 23 March 2026.

ATTACHMENT

- Jurisdictional Comparison – Address Information in Council Member Returns and Declarations of Office (included below).

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The proposed advocacy position aligns to the WALGA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, in particular:

- Influence – Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
- Support – Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation is for State Council to endorse a new [Advocacy Position](#).

Protecting Council Member and Employee Privacy

That WALGA advocates to the State Government to:

- 1. Undertake a review of disclosure requirements for Local Government Council Members and employees under the Local Government Act 1995.*
- 2. Undertake the necessary legislative amendments to strike an appropriate balance between transparency, personal safety, and contemporary community expectations of privacy, including:*
 - a. Amend section 5.95(1) to prescribe that the right to inspect primary and annual returns contained in the register of financial interests under s.5.94(b) does not extend to the full residential address of the relevant person, and is instead limited to the suburb or locality.*
 - b. Amend Form 7 of the Local Government (Constitutional) Regulations 1998 to remove the requirement to disclose a full residential address when making the declaration of office.*

BACKGROUND

At the 3 December 2025 meeting, State Council adopted new Advocacy Position 2.5.20 Electoral Material - Authorisation Statement Address Requirements in response to significant privacy and safety concerns arising from the obligation to publish a candidate's physical address on electoral materials.

When considering this item at the preceding round of Zone meetings, the South East Metropolitan Zone (SEMZ) resolved to request WALGA advocate to amend s.5.95(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) to specify that the right to inspect Primary and Annual Returns (Returns) contained in the Register of Financial Interests under s.5.94(b) does not extend to the residential address of the relevant person.

State Council resolved to refer the SEMZ comments to the Governance Policy Team.

The Governance Policy Team endorsed the proposed advocacy position at its meeting on 23 March 2026.

COMMENT

Public disclosure regimes must strike an appropriate balance between public transparency and personal safety. The inclusion of personal identifying information in publicly accessible documents has become increasingly problematic. As digital publication and internet search capabilities have expanded, material that once had limited circulation can be copied and distributed with ease. This environment has reinforced the need to carefully consider how much personal information is necessary to make publicly available, and the risks that may arise when doing so.

Local Government Act

The Act establishes a range of public disclosure obligations designed to promote transparency and accountability. However, digital publication, increased data availability, and heightened personal safety concerns have created new risks that were not contemplated when these provisions were first drafted.

Returns require relevant persons to disclose personal financial information. Information disclosed includes the address of each parcel of real property, located in the district or in an adjoining district, in which the person had an interest and the nature of the interest in each parcel of real property (s.5.79). In practice, this often results in the disclosure of a Council Member or employee's residential address.

Returns are required to be included in the register of financial interests. Section 5.94(b) of the Act requires any register of financial interest to be made available to the public, and s.5.96 requires the Local Government to provide copies upon request.

Although s.5.93 of the Act establishes penalties for the improper use of information, information can now be copied and distributed almost instantly. In many cases, the harm may occur well before any investigation or action can be commenced.

In addition to the requirement for Council Members to disclose interests in real property as part of their returns, s.2.29 of the Act, together with Form 7 of the *Local Government (Constitution) Regulations 1998*, requires each Council Member to provide their full residential address when making their statutory declaration of office. Although this declaration is not required to be made publicly available under s. 5.94(b) of the Act, some Local Governments livestream or publish recordings of the proceedings. As a result, full residential address details become publicly accessible.

Emerging risks and issues

Local Governments have observed increasing reluctance from Council Members and employees to provide their residential address. Reasons include:

- being registered as a silent elector under the *Electoral Act 1907*,
- experiences or risks of family or domestic violence,
- concerns that leave of absence approvals may signal when a residence may be unoccupied,
- role-related risks, such as potential targeted harassment by dissatisfied community members.

Disclosure of personal residential addresses can also expose individuals to cybersecurity and identity-theft risks, as this information can be combined with other data to build detailed personal profiles. Publicly accessible addresses may make individuals more vulnerable to targeted scams, social engineering, and unwanted contact, increasing both digital and physical security risks.

Parliamentary disclosure obligations

The disclosure of the residential addresses of Members of Parliament in their Primary and Annual Returns has recently been considered by the [Legislative Assembly Procedures and Privileges Committee in Report No.1: Protecting privacy and other reasons to update the Members of Parliament \(Financial Interests\) Act 1992](#).

The Committee recommended that the Government review the relevant legislation, "with a view to addressing the requirement for the disclosure of full residential addresses and to consider broader legislative updates necessary to ensure the Act remains contemporary, effective, and aligned with modern standards of accountability and personal security."

The [Government response](#) supported this recommendation.

Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing

The objectives of the new *Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024* (PRIS Act) include promoting responsible and transparent practices in the handling of personal information and balancing the public interests of protecting the privacy of personal information with the free flow of information by agencies.

Most privacy provisions in the PRIS Act come into effect on 1 July 2026.

The following sections of the PRIS Act intersect with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1995*:

- The information privacy principles do not apply to information that is already publicly accessible. This includes information in documents that are either generally available to the public or made available for public inspection under another written law (s.22).
- An individual may request a public entity to remove their personal information from a public register if making the information publicly available would substantially affect any individual's safety or wellbeing. If the public entity is satisfied that the grounds exist, the public entity must comply with the request unless the public entity is satisfied that the public interest in maintaining public access to the information outweighs any individual interest in the information not being made publicly available (s.77).

While this appears to provide a mechanism for individuals to address specific safety and privacy concerns, it would be preferable to ensure that the legislative requirements avoid unnecessary risks to all Council Members and employees.

WALGA will seek to engage with the Information Commissioner and Deputy Privacy Commissioner to clarify the way in which these and other PRIS Act provisions will apply to Council Members.

Review and amendments to the Local Government Act

As Local Government Council Members and employees share the same safety concerns as Members of Parliament it would be appropriate to echo the Procedures and Privilege Committee and advocate for a broad review of all public disclosure requirements under the *Local Government Act 1995* to ensure that they remain contemporary, effective, and aligned with modern standards of accountability and personal security. A review would allow a clearer, risk-aware framework to be established that protects individuals while preserving appropriate transparency.

Within this broader reform, several targeted amendments are necessary. It is proposed that s. 5.95(1) be amended so that the right to inspect information in the register of financial interests under s. 5.94(b) is limited to the suburb or locality of each property, rather than the full residential address of the relevant person. Additionally, the requirement for Council Members to provide their full residential address in the statutory declaration of office should be removed. These amendments are consistent with practices adopted in other Australian jurisdictions and reflect the approach now being reconsidered for Members of Parliament.

Importantly, these changes would not weaken transparency or accountability. Council Members and employees would still be required to disclose their full residential address in Returns, and would continue to declare direct financial, indirect financial, proximity, and impartiality interests when they arise in decision-making processes. This ensures that

relevant interests remain publicly recorded when they matter, without unnecessarily exposing personal residential details. By limiting public access to only what is necessary, the legislative framework can better protect individual safety while preserving the integrity of the disclosure regime.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the following new Advocacy Position:

Protecting Council Member and Employee Privacy

That WALGA advocates to the State Government to:

- 1. Undertake a review of disclosure requirements for Local Government Council Members and employees under the Local Government Act 1995,*
- 2. Undertake the necessary legislative amendments to strike an appropriate balance between transparency, personal safety, and contemporary community expectations of privacy, including:*
 - a. Amend section 5.95(1) to prescribe that the right to inspect primary and annual returns contained in the register of financial interests under s.5.94(b) does not extend to the full residential address of the relevant person, and is instead limited to the suburb or locality.*
 - b. Amend Form 7 of the Local Government (Constitutional) Regulations 1998 to remove the requirement to disclose a full residential address when making the declaration of office.*

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Trayning

Seconded: Shire of Cunderdin

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

CARRIED

ATTACHMENT: JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON – ADDRESS INFORMATION IN COUNCIL MEMBER RETURNS AND DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE

DISCLOSURES IN RETURNS	
<p>Victoria <u>Local Government Act 2020</u> <u>Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020</u></p>	<p>CEO must prepare summary of personal interests information disclosed in the last personal interest return.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the town or suburb, but not the street address or number of the land that is the place of residence <p>Other matters to be included or excluded are prescribed.</p> <p>Includes that a specified person may request in writing information not be included if the CEO consider including the information would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be reasonably likely to place the personal safety of any person at risk, or unreasonably expose a business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage <p>Summary of personal interest returns available to members of the public.</p> <p>Detailed personal interests returns are only available to certain persons.</p>
<p>New South Wales <u>Governance Information (Public Access) Act 2009</u></p>	<p>From the <i>Information Access Guideline 1 - For Local Councils on the disclosure of information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returns should be made publicly available on the council's website unless there is an overriding public interest against release or to do so would impose unreasonable additional costs on council. A consideration against disclosure is where release of the information may expose a person to a risk of harm or of serious harassment or serious intimidation. In the circumstances where council decides that there is an overriding public interest against disclosure, consideration should then be given to whether it is practicable to release an edited copy of the record (for example redacting the individual's signature or residential address) If it is practicable to do so, then the information should be deleted from a copy of the record and the remainder of the return made available on the council's website. Where information is deleted from a return, council should keep a record indicating, in general terms, the nature of the information redacted.
<p>Queensland <u>Local Government Regulation 2021</u></p>	<p>Suburb or locality of the land is required (not full address).</p>

South Australia <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Personal addresses are not to be published nor are any addresses where the CEO is satisfied that the inclusion in the Register of the address of a person would place at risk the personal safety of that person, a member of that person's family or any other person.
Tasmania	Currently does not require councillors to lodge a personal interests return. The Tasmanian government is implementing a new framework to strengthen the management of local government councillor conflicts of interest, with reforms expected before the 2026 elections.

INFORMATION IN COUNCIL MEMBER DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE	
Victoria <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020</i>	Address not required.
New South Wales <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>	Address not required.
Queensland <i>Local Government Regulation 2021</i>	Address not required.
South Australia <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2013</i>	Address not required.
Tasmania <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2025</i>	Address not required.

13.2. WATER MANAGEMENT ADVOCACY POSITION – STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.2

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A new Water Management Advocacy Position and the retirement of position 6.14 Planning for Water is proposed.
- The new Position has been developed following consultation and feedback on WALGA's *Water Management in Western Australia Discussion Paper*.
- 28 Local Governments provided more than 200 comments on the paper, with the main issues being:
 - equitable access to consistent and reliable water;
 - water licensing and allocation;
 - integrated regional and catchment-scale water planning;
 - water for Public Open Space (POS);
 - funding
 - for critical infrastructure - drainage and irrigation, alternative water sources and sewerage infill and headworks.
 - for water efficiency and water sensitive urban design initiatives.
 - expanding and improving the Waterwise Council Program;
 - access to data and information to inform decision making; and
 - addressing the impacts of stormwater runoff.
- The outcomes sought in 6.14 Planning for Water have been realised in the recently released State Planning Policy 2.9.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed retiring the position and the new position at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

ATTACHMENT

- [Water Management Discussion Paper](#)
- [Water Management Consultation Summary Report](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to the following WALGA Strategic Pillars:

- Influence
 - Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
 - Empower the Local Government sector to build communities equipped for the future.
- Support - Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that the following new [Advocacy Position](#) be **endorsed**:

Water Management

1. *Access to consistent, reliable and adequate water supplies is critical for Local Government operations, community health, amenity, environmental sustainability and economic activity.*
2. *WALGA is calling on the State Government to:*
 - a. *Modernise water management legislation and regulation, including:*
 - i. *Undertaking a review of the water licensing and allocation system to ensure equitable access and prioritise high value community use including for public open space.*

- ii. *Developing a State-wide framework for integrated regional and catchment-scale water planning.*
- b. *Adequately, sustainably and equitably fund critical water infrastructure programs for Local Government, including:*
 - i. *Drainage and irrigation upgrades.*
 - ii. *Alternative water sources (recycled water, stormwater harvesting, desalination and groundwater replenishment) and disused water asset transfer.*
 - iii. *Small-scale sewerage infrastructure headworks and infill sewerage.*
- c. *Expand the Waterwise Council Program statewide and provide:*
 - i. *Increased support and resources to assist Local Government in delivering water efficiency measures.*
 - ii. *Incentives for Local Governments to undertake water efficiency initiatives.*
- d. *Improve water data access and capability for Local Governments to ensure evidence-based decision making.*
- e. *Provide effective leadership, guidance, education and enforcement to address the impacts of stormwater runoff.*

It is proposed that the following Advocacy Position be **retired**:

6.14 Planning for Water

As part of the Water Management Report endorsement process, formal support from the relevant Local Government should be required where:

1. *It is intended that the Local Government will become the infrastructure asset manager; or*
2. *The proposed location of water infrastructure assets will impact Local Government assets or facilities.*

The outcomes sought in Position 6.14 have been realised in the recently released [State Planning Policy 2.9](#).

BACKGROUND

WALGA identified the need to consolidate and expand on current Water related [Advocacy Positions](#) and has undertaken initial consultation, through targeted engagement and consideration of issues raised by the sector previously. To inform the development of a new Advocacy Position, WALGA developed a Discussion Paper to gain feedback from the sector on their current challenges and needs in relation to water management across the state.

WALGA released the Discussion Paper for comment in late November 2025, with an initial deadline of 15 January 2026 for comment, however based on feedback from the sector this deadline was extended to Thursday, 12 March.

28 Local Governments have provided feedback, 14 of those Council/CEO level feedback. The feedback provided by Local Governments was comprehensive, with over 200 individual comments received across the submissions. WALGA acknowledges the significant time and consideration given by Members in providing that level of feedback.

The main themes of the feedback reflect those explored in the Discussion Paper and are consistent across Local Government:

- Legislation which is inequitable and outdated, particularly for licensing and allocation.

- State legislation should align with the National Water Agreement, particularly strategic, long term integrated planning and equitable access to drinking water.
- Aging and insufficient water infrastructure.
- Support and resourcing needed to explore and mainstream alternative water sources.
- Reactive approaches to headworks and sewerage servicing constraining development, particularly in regional and high-growth areas.
- Public Open Space (POS) in relation to planning decisions not accounting for the water needed to sustain these areas.
- Statewide expansion of the Waterwise Council program and improvement in program support and design.
- High interest in improving and supporting water efficiency and water sensitive urban design outcomes.
- Water data gaps and poor data sharing limits sound decision making.
- Water quality as an emerging and under-recognised issue.

WALGA has consolidated the feedback into a Consultation Report which summarises the main themes and issues raised by the sector and how it has been addressed in the draft Advocacy Position.

COMMENT

The new Position has been informed by the information, issues and priorities identified in feedback received from Local Governments on the WALGA Discussion Paper.

A new Advocacy Position is timely given the release of [Made Possible by Water](#) by the State Government on 21 March 2026, a document outlining WA's water future. A comprehensive Advocacy Position on this issue will be essential to assist WALGA's advocacy and influence how the Government delivers the priorities identified. Some of the matters identified in the draft Advocacy Position are reflected in Made Possible by Water, including expansion of the WaterWise Program and delivery of new water sources.

The Environment Policy Team endorsed the new Advocacy Position and the retirement of Position 6.14 at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Endorse the following new Advocacy Position:

Water Management

1. *Access to consistent, reliable and adequate water supplies is critical for Local Government operations, community health, amenity, environmental sustainability and economic activity.*
2. *WALGA is calling on the State Government to:*
 - a. *Modernise water management legislation and regulation, including:*
 - i. *undertaking a review of the water licensing and allocation system to ensure equitable access and prioritise high value community use including for public open space*
 - ii. *developing a state-wide framework for integrated regional and catchment-scale water planning.*

- b. *Adequately, sustainably and equitably fund critical water infrastructure programs for Local Government, including:*
 - i. *drainage and irrigation upgrades*
 - ii. *alternative water sources (recycled water, stormwater harvesting, desalination and groundwater replenishment) and disused water asset transfer*
 - iii. *small-scale sewerage infrastructure headworks and infill sewerage.*
- c. *Expand the Waterwise Council Program statewide and provide:*
 - i. *increased support and resources to assist Local Government in delivering water efficiency measures*
 - ii. *incentives for Local Governments to undertake water efficiency initiatives.*
- d. *Improve water data access and capability for Local Governments to ensure evidence-based decision making.*
- e. *Provide effective leadership, guidance, education and enforcement to address the impacts of stormwater runoff.*

2. Retires Advocacy Position *6.14 Planning for Water.*

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Yilgarn
Seconded: Shire of Kellerberrin

That the 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. OFF ROADS VEHICLES ADVOCACY POSITION – STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.3

By Rebecca Hicks, Policy Advisor Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is proposed that Advocacy Position 3.12 Off Road Vehicles (ORV) be retired.
- The *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Vehicles) Act 1978* (the ORV Act) provides the legislative framework for the use of off-road vehicles within permitted areas in WA.
- Nine Local Governments own and maintain Off Road Vehicle (ORV) areas.
- Advocacy Position 3.12 Off Road Vehicles was adopted by State Council in 2018 in response to concerns from Members about the use of permitted ORV areas.
- Amendments to the ORV Act in 2025 address the core objectives of the ORV Advocacy Position, particularly as it relates to registration and enforcement.
- The retirement of the ORV Advocacy Position was endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

ATTACHMENT

- [*Control of Vehicles \(Off-road Areas\) Amendment Act 2025*](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Retiring this Advocacy Position aligns with the following WALGA Strategic Pillars:

- Influence
 - Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
 - Empower the Local Government sector to build communities equipped for the future.
- Support
 - Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that Advocacy Position [3.12 Off Road Vehicles](#) be **retired**.

Legislation relating to off road vehicles should be reviewed to align registration and licensing of off-road vehicles with other vehicle types are users. In addition, educational resources should be developed in consultation with users, regulators, and vendors relating to safety, regulatory compliance and other associated matters.

BACKGROUND

The *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Vehicles) Act 1978* (the ORV Act) prohibits the use of Off Road Vehicles (ORVs) in areas outside of permitted areas and makes provisions for the use of ORVs in permitted areas. The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) is responsible for administering the legislation and providing [information and support](#) to users and Local Governments. The legislation defines ORVs as including, but not limited to, trail bikes, quad bikes, beach buggies and road licensed vehicles such as four-wheel drives when used in off-road locations.

The use of ORVs outside of permitted areas can have impacts on Local Governments and communities including community safety in public spaces, road safety and environmental impacts. These issues fall under the scope of other legislation.

Nine Local Governments currently maintain and operate permitted areas: the Cities of Greater Geraldton, Karratha, Kwinana and Swan and the Shires of Carnarvon, Dandaragan, Gingin, Port Hedland and York.

WALGA's Advocacy Position was adopted by State Council in 2018, in response to Member concerns regarding the use of permitted ORV areas.

The ORV Act was amended in 2025 to align penalties and enforcement expectations with other WA transport legislation. The *Amendment Act* includes provisions to introduce online and label registrations and increase penalties for existing offences. The majority of the ORV Amendment Act commenced with immediate effect in August 2025. Sections of the legislation relating to registration labels are dependent on system design changes to the online registration platform. The legislation regulations and commencement date are expected by the end of 2026.

In 2024, the [State Government announced \\$4.8 million](#) in grant funding for Local Governments to develop new and upgrade existing ORV areas. This funding recognises the key role Local Government plays in the upkeep and management of ORV areas.

COMMENT

The ORV Amendment Act addresses the core objectives of the WALGA ORV advocacy position, particularly as it relates to registration and enforcement. As the intended outcomes of the advocacy position have been achieved, it is proposed that Advocacy Position 3.12 Off Road Vehicles be retired. WALGA will work with LGIRS to provide advice and support on the commencement of the Act regulations for Members managing permitted areas.

WALGA has engaged with Members that currently manage ORV permitted areas. Six Local Governments have responded and provided their support for the retirement of the advocacy position.

WALGA will continue to monitor emerging issues associated with ORVs, with a particular focus on usage outside of permitted areas.

The proposed retirement of the ORV advocacy position was endorsed by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council retire Advocacy Position 3.12 *Off Road Vehicles*.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Tammin
Seconded: Shire of Narembeen

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

CARRIED

13.4. HOMELESSNESS ADVOCACY POSITION – STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 8.4

By Hannah Godsave, Manager Community Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is proposed that the 2019 Advocacy Position 3.11 Homelessness be updated.
- While responding to homelessness is a State and Australian Government responsibility, the impacts of homelessness intersect with multiple areas of Local Government service delivery and requires them to manage community expectations.
- Western Australian Local Governments are reporting increased numbers of people experiencing homelessness, including Local Governments that have historically experienced minimal impact.
- WALGA undertook a survey of Members in early 2026 to better understand the impact on the sector and inform a review of the current Advocacy Position.
- The updated Position reflects the sector's view that the Australian and Western Australian Government should provide leadership, support and funding to prevent and respond to homelessness, in particular specialist services, social and affordable housing and wraparound services.
- The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the revised position at its meeting on 19 March 2026.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This item relates to the following WALGA Strategic Pillars:

- Influence
 - Lead advocacy on issues important to Local Government.
 - Empower the Local Government sector to build communities equipped for the future.
- Support
 - Anticipate, understand and respond to Member needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that the **existing** Advocacy Position [3.11 Homelessness](#):

WALGA recognises that Local Government through its planning, health, community development and regulatory powers can facilitate positive local and regional responses to end homelessness, however does not see that it has a lead role. Rather, Local Government's role is one of a stakeholder that requires early engagement in the understanding of collaborative approaches that improve the quality of life for people experiencing homelessness in all of its manifestations.

be **replaced** with a new Advocacy Position as follows:

WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to provide leadership, support and funding to prevent and respond to homelessness, in particular:

1. *Ensuring specialist homelessness services are responsive to need, place-based and people-centred.*
2. *Investing in social and affordable housing and wraparound services.*

BACKGROUND

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines homelessness as when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate;
- has no tenure, or tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The ABS Census of Population and Housing provides the authoritative data source on people experiencing homelessness. The 2021 Census reported 9,729 people experiencing homelessness in WA. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare provides more contemporary data based on interactions with specialist homelessness services. In 2024-25, almost 289,000 (1 in 115) people engaged with specialist homelessness services in WA, of which 47% were accessing homelessness support for the first time.

While responding to homelessness is a State and Australian Government responsibility, the impacts of homelessness intersect with multiple areas of Local Government service delivery, including the maintenance of public spaces, planning and zoning for appropriate services and revenue-related functions such as rates and grants administration. Local Governments must also manage community expectations about how they will respond to homelessness.

WALGA's current advocacy position was adopted by State Council in 2019 in the lead up to the release of [*All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020–2030*](#) (the Strategy) released by the State Government. The Strategy sets out a vision for a whole of community response, led by the Department of Communities, working towards ending homelessness in Western Australia. The Strategy identifies a predominantly supportive role for the Local Government sector in addressing homelessness, while also acknowledging that some Local Governments directly provide homelessness and accommodation services. Suggested sector contributions in the Strategy include facilitating local partnerships, identifying rough sleepers, sharing local area knowledge to inform State Government resourcing decisions, and connecting people to specialist services. This supportive role for the Local Government sector is reflected in the current Advocacy Position.

At the National level, the [National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness](#) provides a five-year funding and accountability framework between the Australian and State/Territory Governments to support social housing and homelessness services until June 2029. The bilateral schedule for Western Australia sets out a \$165.9 million homelessness funding contribution from both parties.

COMMENT

Local Governments have been reporting increased numbers of people experiencing homelessness, including Local Governments that have historically experienced minimal impact. Local Governments have shared that they are facing growing pressure to meet both their defined obligations and community expectations for comprehensive responses, including specialist homelessness services triage, investment in housing and support service provision.

To better understand the issues being raised by Members, WALGA conducted a sector survey on homelessness in early 2026. 68 responses (49%) were received, 26 metropolitan and 42 regional, with representation from all WALGA Zones. Key findings from the survey include:

- 74% of respondents report an increase in the significance of homelessness in their Local Government area in the last two years.
- 60% of respondents report an increase in enquires from community members regarding homelessness in the last two years.
 - Key issues raised in community enquiries are rough sleeping and persons living in vehicles.
- 23% of respondents consider there is no role beyond defined responsibilities for Local Government in response to homelessness.
- 61% of respondents consider preventative measures to reduce homelessness and facilitating connections to specialist service providers as an appropriate role for Local Government in response to homelessness.
- 83% of respondents rank State and Federal Government funding as the highest or second highest priority enabler to respond to homelessness.
- 51% of respondents report that current specialist homelessness services are not adequate within their Local Government area.
- Respondents rank affordable housing as the top priority for support/services to address homelessness, followed by wraparound services and specialist support services.

Informed by survey responses and acknowledging the support role of Local Government identified in the State Strategy, the updated position calls on the Australian and Western Australian Government to provide the necessary leadership, support and funding to prevent and respond to homelessness, in particular specialist services, social and affordable housing and wraparound services.

The People and Place Policy Team endorsed the revised position at its meeting on 19 March 2026 meeting.

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council replace Advocacy Position 3.11 Homelessness with the following:

WALGA calls on the Western Australian and Australian Governments to provide leadership, support and funding to prevent and respond to homelessness, in particular:

1. *Ensuring specialist homelessness services are responsive to need, place-based and people-centred.*
2. *Investing in social and affordable housing and wraparound services.*

RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Shire of Bruce Rock

Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

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

CARRIED

13.5. 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, Policy Team and Committee Reports or the Key Activity Reports.

Nil.

14. EMERGING ISSUES

The **Shire of Cunderdin** raised concerns in relation to recent State Government decisions related to access for Heavy Vehicle (RAV network) road access, which have been enacted. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Shire can liaise with the Secretariat to further clarify the issue and progress further action if necessary.

The **Secretariat** provided a brief update about the *Local Government Amendment (Rating of Certain Mining Licences) Bill 2025*, following the emerging item raised at the previous Zone meeting. The Secretariat understands the Bill is yet to progress to Committee of the Whole House in the Legislative Council (which is ordinarily where members may put amendments to the Bill), and that notice of amendments have already been placed on the notice paper.

15. NEXT MEETING

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 19 May commencing at 8:00am, via MTeams.

The next Great Eastern Country Zone meeting will be held on Thursday, 11 June 2026 commencing at 9:30am. This meeting will be hosted at WALGA's office at 170 Railway Parade West Leederville, and **online via MS Teams**. A meeting link will be circulated, while delegates who may be in Perth are welcome to attend in-person.

16. CLOSURE

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 1:11pm.