



# State Council Agenda

9 September 2022

Regional Meeting

Hosted by the Peel Country Zone

## NOTICE OF MEETING

Ordinary meeting no. 4 of 2022 of the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) State Council to be hosted by the Peel Country Zone at the City of Mandurah Council Chambers, 83 Mandurah Terrace, Mandurah on Friday, 9 September beginning at 11:00am.

### 1. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### 1.1. Attendance

<b>Members</b>	WALGA President - <b>Chair</b>	President Cr Karen Chappel JP
	WALGA Deputy President, Central Metropolitan Zone	Cr Paul Kelly
	Avon-Midland Country Zone	President Cr Rosemary Madacsi
	Central Country Zone	President Cr Phillip Blight
	Central Metropolitan Zone	Cr Helen Sadler
	East Metropolitan Zone	Cr Catherine Ehrhardt
	East Metropolitan Zone	Cr John Daw
	Goldfields Esperance Country Zone	President Cr Laurene Bonza
	Gascoyne Country Zone	President Cr Cheryl Cowell
	Great Eastern Country Zone	President Cr Stephen Strange
	Great Southern Country Zone	President Cr Chris Pavlovich
	Kimberley Country Zone	Cr Chris Mitchell JP
	Murchison Country Zone	Cr Les Price
	North Metropolitan Zone	Cr Frank Cvitan JP
	North Metropolitan Zone	Mayor Mark Irwin
	North Metropolitan Zone	Cr Russ Fishwick JP
	Northern Country Zone	Cr Isabelle Scott ( <b>Deputy</b> )
	Peel Country Zone	President Cr Michelle Rich
	Pilbara Country Zone	Mayor Peter Long
	South East Metropolitan Zone	Cr Carl Celedin
South East Metropolitan Zone	Mayor Ruth Butterfield	
South Metropolitan Zone	Cr Doug Thompson	
South Metropolitan Zone	Mayor Carol Adams OAM	
South Metropolitan Zone	Mayor Logan Howlett JP	
South West Country Zone	President Cr Tony Dean	
<b>Ex Officio</b>	Local Government Professionals WA President	Ms Annie Riordan
<b>Secretariat</b>	Chief Executive Officer	Mr Nick Sloan
	Executive Director Member Services	Mr Tony Brown
	Executive Manager Advocacy	Ms Narelle Cant
	Executive Manager Infrastructure	Mr Ian Duncan
	Executive Manager Policy	Ms Nicole Matthews
	Manager Association & Corporate Governance	Mr Tim Lane
	Executive Officer Governance	Ms Kathy Robertson

#### 1.2. Apologies

The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor – City of Perth State Councillor, Avon-Midland Country Zone	Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas Cr Ken Seymour
State Councillor, Northern Country Zone	President Cr Moira Girando JP

### 1.3. Announcements

- 1.3.1. WALGA acknowledges the Bindjareb people who are the original inhabitants and Traditional Custodians of the land in and around Mandurah on which we meet today and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

## 2. MINUTES

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### 2.1. Minutes of the meeting held 6 July 2022

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#### RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the WALGA State Council meeting held on [Wednesday, 6 July 2022](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

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### 2.2. Flying Minute – 2022-23 State Budget Submission Approach

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#### RECOMMENDATION

That the [Flying Minute – 2022-23 State Budget Submission Approach](#) be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

## 4. EMERGING ISSUES

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

## 5. MATTERS FOR DECISION

- As per matters listed
- Items Under Separate Cover to State Council only

## 6. MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION

- As per matters listed

## 7. ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

### 7.1 Policy Team Reports

- 7.1.1 Environment and Waste Policy Team
- 7.1.2 Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team
- 7.1.3 Infrastructure Policy Team
- 7.1.4 People and Place Policy Team

### 7.2 Key Activity Report

- 7.2.1 Advocacy Unit
- 7.2.2 Infrastructure Unit

7.2.3 Member Services Unit

7.2.4 Policy Unit

7.3 President's Report

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the President's Report for September 2022 be received.

7.4 CEO's Report

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the CEO's Report for September 2022 be received.

7.5 Ex Officio Reports

7.5.1 The Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas is an apology for this meeting.

7.5.2 LG Professionals President, Annie Riordan, will provide the LG Professionals report to the meeting.

**8. ADDITIONAL ZONE RESOLUTIONS**

To be advised following Zone meetings.

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next ordinary meeting of the WALGA State Council will be held in the Boardroom at WALGA, ONE70, LV1, 170 Railway Parade, West Leederville on Wednesday, 7 December commencing at 4:15pm.

**10. CLOSURE**

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## 5. MATTERS FOR DECISION

### 5.1 2023-24 State Budget Submission (05-0001-03-0006 DM)

By Dana Mason, Manager Economics

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That the 2023-24 State Budget Submission be endorsed.**

#### Executive Summary

- Each year, WALGA prepares a submission to the State Government outlining the sector's priorities for the upcoming budget.
- The identified priorities will help to deliver a number of important objectives for the future of the State, including:
  1. Supporting industry and diversifying our economy
  2. Taking action on climate change
  3. Supporting the wellbeing of all Western Australians
  4. Delivering a legislative environment that meets the needs of our modern economy and society
- The proposed approach to the 2023-24 Submission and priorities were endorsed by State Council in July via [Flying Minute](#).

#### Attachment

- 2023-24 State Budget Submission

#### Policy Implications

The submission reflects related WALGA policy positions.

#### Background

Each year, WALGA prepares a submission to the State Government outlining the sector's priorities for the upcoming budget.

In July 2022, WALGA circulated a proposed submission approach and list of priorities to the State Council, which was endorsed. It asserted that to provide the best chance of success and standing out from the crowd, WALGA's submission would be:

- *Targeted* – an extended list of priorities is not likely to be considered by Government given they already have a full agenda of election commitments and other emerging priorities.
- *Aligned to with Government election commitments, policies and priorities (e.g., Diversify WA and supporting key industries, climate action)* – the Government is more likely to fund requests that align with their agenda or that address a pressing or emerging issue.
- *Of demonstrable benefit to the State and the Community* – a strong evidence base is needed to demonstrate the value that the initiatives will deliver for the community. Those which already have a demonstrated track record, or where there is a co-funding arrangement are likely to have a greater chance of success, or where there can be quantifiable, tangible benefits from the investment or legislative/policy/regulatory reform/implementation

Based on the feedback from State Council, the initiatives for inclusion in the submission are below.

- Additional funding under the **State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement**, to support renewal of Local Government roads and improve safety.
- Create a **training program for building surveyors in Local Government**, to address current and emerging shortages which have the potential to impact on future construction activity.
- Invest in climate change adaptation, including funding for managing urgent **coastal erosion** hotspots, and enhancing the **urban tree canopy**.
- **Ensure adequate capital funding is provided under the Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS)**. In the first instance funding should be provided to undertake an audit of existing facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment for both Local Government

Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Services (SES) in order to create a comprehensive asset management plan, that can guide future investment decisions. LGGS funding should also be increased to support the unsuccessful capital grants funding applications by Local Governments to the 2020-21 LGGS Capital Grants Committee.

- **Expand the Community Emergency Services Manager** program to all Local Governments that manage bush fire brigades.
- Increased funding for the **Bushfire Mitigation Activity Funding Grant Program** to enable Local Governments to undertake activities to reduce bushfire risk on high-risk State-owned land across WA, and expand the program to allow Local Governments to manage bushfire risk and deliver programs that support local community bushfire preparedness.
- Address under funding and lack of access to **health services in regional and rural areas** of WA, and improve coordination in the planning and provision of GPs and related primary health services in these areas.
- Prepare a high-level **Mid-Tier Public Transport Plan and Strategy** for greater Perth, in consultation with relevant Local Governments, to alleviate ongoing congestion on our roads and create a safer and more convenient transport network.
- Additional funding to assist Local Governments to build communities across regional Western Australia through the **Regional Development Assistance Program**, and redefining the program to separate projects in smaller towns and those in larger towns and cities.
- In partnership with Local Government, contribute funding for the **State Underground Power Program** with State Government funding prioritised to project areas where the benefits to the households are less (lower property values) and the financial capacity to contribute is less.
- Provide funding to support the costs associated with the implementation of **Local Government Act Reform Priorities** to ensure the sector has the capacity and capability to transition to the new requirements and fulfil its obligations.
- Resourcing for the **implementation of legislative reform priorities**, including:
  - *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021*
  - *Public Health Planning under Stage 5 of the Public Health Act 2016*
  - *Consolidated Emergency Services Act*
  - *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*

The initiatives in WALGA's State Budget Submission total \$443.8 million across the forward estimates.

## Comment

The current economic challenges being posed by inflation make a difficult environment in which to set the State Budget. The Government will be faced with rising costs of program and infrastructure delivery and challenges in progressing the asset investment pipeline within expected timeframes; without placing additional financial pressures on the WA community.

While WA's sound fiscal position (predicted budget surplus of \$3.5 billion in 2023-24) means the State is well placed to navigate a high-cost environment, now more than ever it is important to ensure that spending is directed towards programs and infrastructure that will provide the highest value to the community.

Local Governments are committed to working constructively with the State Government, and with their unique knowledge of local communities can help to ensure that funding is targeted to priority initiatives. The State Budget Submission is an important opportunity to put forward priority issues for Local Governments, and to demonstrate the sector's willingness to work collaboratively with the State Government.

Once the submission has been endorsed by State Council, WALGA will be undertaking advocacy linked into the key milestones associated with the State Government's process for developing the Budget and target a number of audiences including the Minister for Local Government, Premier/Treasurer, key members of the Expenditure Review Committee, and heads of key agencies. There will also be traditional and digital media promotion of the key initiatives included in the submission.



## **ABOUT THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA or 'the Association') is the peak organisation for Local Government in Western Australia. The Association is an independent, membership-based group representing and supporting the work and interests of 137 mainland Local Governments in Western Australia, plus the Indian Ocean Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

The Association provides an essential voice for more than 1,200 Elected Members, more than 23,000 Local Government employees, and the 2.6 million constituents that they serve and represent. The Association also provides professional advice and offers services that provide financial benefits to Local Governments.

WALGA is committed to advancing the vision for Local Government in Western Australia where:

- Local Governments will be built on good governance, autonomy, local leadership, democracy, community engagement and diversity.
- Local Governments will have the capacity to provide economically, socially and environmentally sustainable services and infrastructure that meets the needs of their communities.



## INTRODUCTION

Since March 2020, governments, the community and businesses have been focussed on navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Balancing the conflicting objectives of protecting the health and wellbeing of Western Australians, while supporting jobs and the economy has been a difficult task.

While the pandemic is not yet over, focus is increasingly shifting towards living with the virus and planning for life beyond the pandemic.

While a global pandemic was unexpected – and its impact unprecedented – it is incumbent on all levels of government to respond, plan and prepare for the range of economic, social and environmental challenges already with us and on the horizon for Western Australia.

Inflation is an immediate concern, with supply chain constraints and shortages of labour adding to costs faced by households, businesses and Government, and acting as a brake on economic growth.

WA's soft landing from COVID-19 to date and our robust fiscal position means the State is well placed to navigate rising costs, but this will require a disciplined approach and a focus on delivering programs that will provide the highest value to the community.

Local Governments are committed to working constructively with the State Government, and with their unique understanding of their local communities can help ensure funding is well-targeted and effectively supports Western Australians through current and future economic, social and environmental challenges. The State Government, with its leadership and policy direction, and Local Government, with an on the ground presence in all communities, have complementary strengths. By working together, WA communities will be better off.

The initiatives in WALGA's Budget Submission, totalling \$443.8 million across the forward estimates, will deliver significant benefits to communities across the State through:

- Supporting industry and diversifying our economy
- Taking action on climate change
- Supporting the wellbeing of all Western Australians
- Delivering a legislative environment that supports a stronger economy and sharing prosperity

While modest in quantum, if adopted these initiatives will have significant impact and align with several of the State Government's important priorities and policy objectives.

WALGA welcomes the opportunity to work with the State Government to progress these initiatives.

## BUDGET CONTEXT

The 2023-24 Budget will be set against the backdrop of a challenging and uncertain time for the global economy.

High levels of inflation are being experienced around the world, due to COVID-19 disruptions to supply chains, the war in Ukraine, and elevated levels of demand.

WA is not immune from these factors. The Perth Consumer Price Index grew by 7.4% over the 12 months to June 2022, the highest level in three decades and well above the national CPI of 5.1%. WA is also facing labour shortages and capacity constraints in some sectors, which are further exacerbating this high-cost environment.

The construction sector has been particularly hard hit by supply constraints for key materials such as bitumen, structural steel, and ready-mixed concrete, as well as labour shortages, coinciding with increased activity in response to COVID-19 related stimulus spending. This has resulted in double digit rates of growth in construction prices over the past year, with building construction costs up 16.4% over the year to June, and road and bridge construction costs up by 12%.<sup>1</sup> Construction wages are expected to grow faster than the average wages growth for WA.<sup>2</sup>

The State Government is facing rising costs of program and infrastructure delivery and challenges in progressing the asset investment pipeline within expected timeframes; while the WA community is feeling increasing financial pressures.

Local Governments have also faced similar challenges in setting their budgets in recent times. After a period where most Local Governments froze rates during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and many either froze or had minimal increases last year to support residents and businesses through that difficult time, the sector is now facing rising costs in providing community services and infrastructure. This has been reflected in WALGA's Local Government Cost Index (LGCI). Annual growth in the LGCI hit 5.2% in the March quarter, the highest level since 2008. WALGA forecasts the LGCI to finish the year up 5.9% in 2021-22. These costs are not expected to decrease in future years, though the rate of growth will ease with the LGCI forecast to slow to 3.2% in 2022-23 and 2.4% in 2023-24.

WALGA members report that these cost pressures are particularly acute in regional areas, due to limited suppliers and supply of materials, worker shortages and high demand from major infrastructure projects.

Now more than ever it is important to ensure that spending is directed towards programs and infrastructure that will provide the highest value to communities throughout WA. Local Governments are committed to working constructively with the State Government, and with their in-depth knowledge of local communities can help ensure funding is directed to the areas of greatest need and has the greatest impact.

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<sup>1</sup> Macromonitor, *Construction Cost Indexes Western Australia*, June 2022

<sup>2</sup> Macromonitor, *Construction Cost Indexes Western Australia*, June 2022

## PRIORITY AREAS FOR FUNDING

Initiative	How funding will be used	Funding request
Restore the Local Government share of motor vehicle licensing revenue to 27%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewal of Local Government roads</li> <li>• Inclusion of safety improvements as part of renewal projects</li> <li>• Mass action safety improvements across targeted parts of the network</li> </ul>	Additional \$150 million between 2023-24 and 2026-27
Provide Training for Building Surveyors	Training for candidates including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced Diploma of Building Surveying or Bachelor of Building Surveying</li> <li>• Paid work experience with their Local Governments</li> <li>• Other training and professional development opportunities</li> </ul>	\$6.5 million between 2023-24 and 2024-25 to support 40 Local Government building surveyor positions
State Urban Forest Strategy and Urban Greening Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the planting of 60,000 trees</li> </ul>	\$20 million between 2023-24 and 2026-27
Protect priority coastal erosion hotspots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Local Governments to complete and implement coastal hazard risk assessment and adaptation planning to manage coastal erosion and inundation hot spots</li> </ul>	\$55 million between 2023-24 and 2026-27 to be allocated to the Coastal Adaptation and Protection Fund
Increase Local Government Grant Scheme funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund backlog of capital projects</li> <li>• Prepare a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan for Local Government emergency services facilities and equipment.</li> <li>• Support Local Governments to meet increased Work Health and Safety requirements, deliver training and support flexible small asset purchases depending on local requirements</li> </ul>	Immediate allocation of \$5.9 million to capital grants in 2023-24  Allocation for the preparation of a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan for Local Government emergency services facilities and equipment  Immediate increase in annual LGGS operating grant budget of

		\$2.75 million from 2023-24
Expand the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program	<p>Expand the CESM program over two stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage 1 expand CESM Program to an additional 24 Local Governments that manage volunteer Bush Fire Brigades</li> <li>• Stage 2 expand CESM Program to other interested Local Governments that do not manage volunteer Bush Fire Brigades</li> </ul>	<p>Stage 1 – Additional \$3 million annually from 2023-24</p> <p>Stage 2 – Additional \$1.4 million annually from 2026-27</p> <p>Program should be fully funded by the Emergency Services Levy (with additional funds from other revenue sources if required)</p>
Increase funding for the Mitigation Activity Funding Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Local Governments to carry out essential mitigation works on Crown Land to reduce bushfire risk to local communities</li> <li>• Fund the preparation of improved and safer access to and from land during bushfire response activities</li> <li>• Support collaboration between key stakeholders in management of bushfire risk in WA</li> </ul>	\$10 million annually from 2023-24, comprised of \$5 million from the Emergency Service Levy funds, and the reinstatement of \$5 million annually from the Royalties for Regions Program
Improve access to primary health services in regional, rural and remote areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and attract GPs and other primary health services in regional, rural and remote areas</li> </ul>	Funding requirements to be determined in consultation with key stakeholders
Redefine and increase funding for the Regional Development Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the cost of headworks and other land development costs in regional areas constrained by a lack of housing and where private development is not viable</li> <li>• Separate projects in smaller towns from projects in larger towns and cities</li> <li>• Fund a broader range of projects of regional significance, administered through Voluntary Regional Organisations of Councils and Regional Subsidiaries</li> </ul>	Additional \$5 million per annum from 2023-24
Prepare a Mid-Tier Public Transport Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a high-level Mid-Tier Public Transport Plan and Strategy for greater Perth (including cycling and walking connections),</li> </ul>	\$10 million between 2023-24 and 2024-25

and Strategy for greater Perth	in consultation with relevant Local Governments	
Contribute funding for the Network Renewal Underground Power program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacement of overhead distribution poles and conductors with underground power in areas with lower property values and a higher proportion of property owners with lower financial capacity</li> </ul>	\$34 million per annum from 2024-25
Fund the Establishment of a Chief Inspector of Local Government and Office of the Local Government Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for approximately 14 FTE staff including accommodation and travel</li> </ul>	\$2.5 million per annum from 2023-24
<p>Implement key legislative reform priorities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021</i></li> <li>Public Health Planning under Stage 5 of the <i>Public Health Act</i></li> <li>The consolidation of the Emergency Services legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed consultation and engagement with Local Governments and other relevant stakeholders</li> <li>Training and support for Local Governments to fulfil their obligations under new legislative frameworks (e.g. implementation of Public Health Plans)</li> <li>Provision of funding to support smaller rural and regional Councils with the development of Local Public Health Plans</li> <li>The establishment and ongoing functioning of the new Aboriginal heritage system, with respect to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council (ACHC), Local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Services and Local Governments (LACHS)</li> </ul>	Funding requirements to be determined

## SUPPORTING INDUSTRY AND DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, WA's economy has proved resilient.

Our economy continued to grow at a time when other economies around Australia and the world were in recession. In 2019-20, WA's economy grew by 1.05% (compared to no growth in the national economy), followed by 2.6% in 2020-21 (compared to national growth of 1.5%). This positive trend is expected to continue with Treasury forecasting gross state product to expand by 3.75% in 2021-22.

Our labour market has also recovered quickly, with the unemployment rate dropping back to 3.4% in June 2022 - well down on the COVID-19 induced high of 8.5% in June 2020 – and more than 181,000 jobs created since the pandemic hit.

WA's positive economic performance has in large part been due to the state's mining sector, which has continued to underpin growth on the back of strong commodity prices.

While the strength of our mining sector has been central to our economic performance during the pandemic, progress towards diversifying the WA economy has been limited. In 2020-21, mining represented more than 40% of WA's gross state product – up from almost 30% a decade earlier.<sup>3</sup> This dwarfed the next largest contributions made by the construction and healthcare sectors (around 5.4% respectively).

Diversification remains an important objective to limit WA's exposure to commodity cycles, and this has been recognised by the State Government through its *Diversify WA* Economic Development Framework.

*Diversify WA* identifies an important role for Government in facilitating diversification by setting the “strategic foundations for growth and diversification, including a stable regulatory environment, appropriate infrastructure and sound fiscal management.”

It is important to recognise that Local Government can also support the setting of these “strategic foundations” for diversification.

Local Government has a broad range of responsibilities and functions that affect the economic and business environment, such as the provision of infrastructure, regulatory activities, and local-level leadership and planning.

The Local Government sector is ready and willing to be an important partner to help the State achieve its goal of a strong and diversified economy delivering secure, quality jobs through increased investment across a broad range of industries. Local Governments can also play a key role in driving local projects that stimulate job creation and economic growth and support small and medium businesses to thrive in a more diversified economy.

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<sup>3</sup> ABS State Accounts, GVA CVM

**Restore the Local Government share of motor vehicle licensing revenue to 27%**

Return the Local Government share of motor vehicle licensing revenue to 27% over the course of the next State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement.

**Funding Required**

Additional \$150 million between 2023-24 and 2026-27

**Program Benefits**

- Support the movement of freight and efficient supply chains
- Maintain a safe and efficient road network
- Improve Aboriginal employment outcomes within the road industry
- Develop Local Government capacity to use recycled materials in road construction and renewal
- Mass action safety improvements across targeted parts of the network, and inclusion of low-cost road safety treatments as part of renewals work

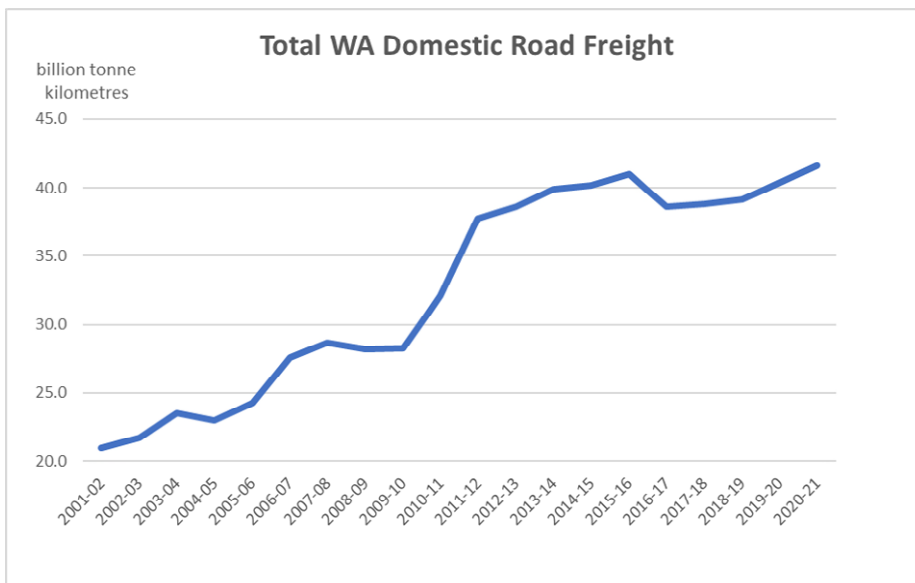
**Summary**

Investing in appropriate infrastructure will be an important enabler to unlock new industries and support WA’s transition to a more diversified economy. In particular, roads are critical to support the development of new industries by connecting markets and supply chains.

WA’s key export industries in mining and agriculture and areas of future opportunity such as energy, tourism and other primary industries, rely on increased freight productivity in order to remain globally competitive. In many cases new industry development opportunities are in remote parts of the State that are not served by freight rail or high standard National or State highways. Critical parts of the supply chain for these projects require use of the Local Government road network.

There is a pressing need for on-going and increased funding for Local Government roads from licence fee revenue for a number of reasons.

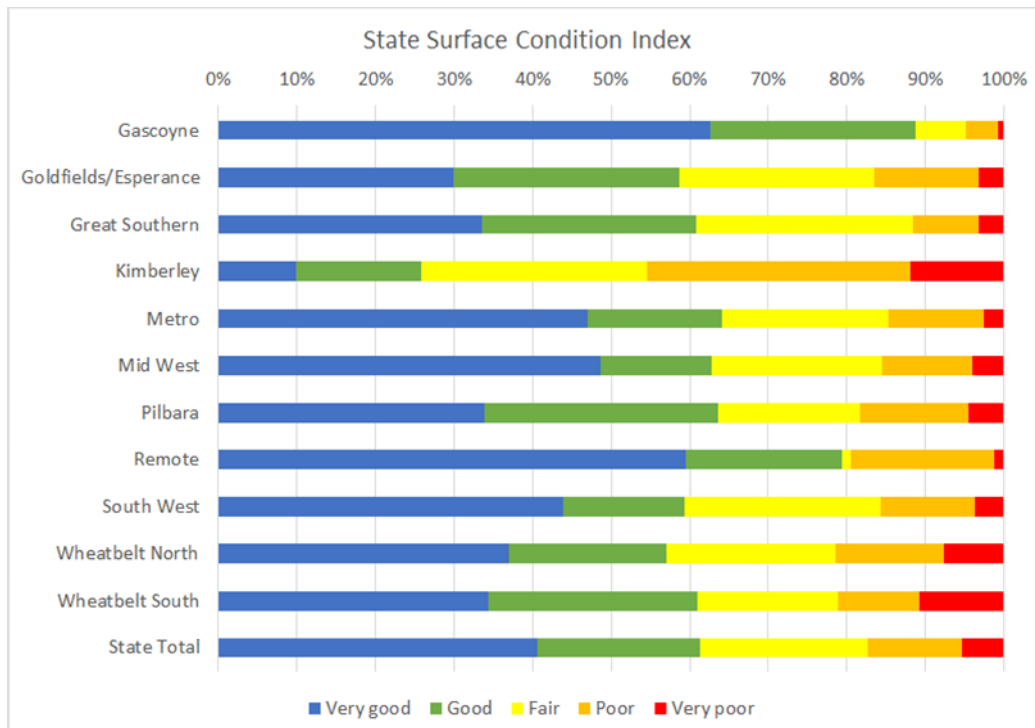
- *Road Utilisation and Consumption is Increasing* - Heavy vehicles have the greatest impact on road consumption or wear, particularly outside the major urban areas. Growth in road freight movements in WA averaged nearly 4% per year cumulatively for the past 20 years. Almost all these journeys include use of the Local Government road network.



**Source: Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics, Infrastructure: Australian Infrastructure and Transport Statistics - Yearbook 2021**

WA leads the nation in providing extensive road network access for large, heavy freight trucks, enabling an economically productive road freight industry. However, this comes at the cost of increased road consumption, requiring more frequent renewal of pavements and surfaces.

Local Governments are focussed on the need to optimise road maintenance and renewal to minimise the lifecycle costs of roads. However, currently around 15% of the network has a Poor or Very Poor surface condition.<sup>4</sup> Without sustained, well-targeted intervention, the condition of parts of the network can deteriorate quickly resulting in much higher overall costs.



Source: Road Assets and Expenditure Report 2020-21

- *Costs are increasing rapidly* - Road and bridge construction costs increased 11.1% in the 12 months to March 2022<sup>5</sup>, and are expected to increase 12.3% in the year to June 2022. Cost increases are forecast to remain above trend in 2022-23 before moderating at a new, substantially higher level. Increases of this magnitude cannot be absorbed within Local Governments existing budgets.
- *Funding Capacity is Limited* - Outside of the Perth Metropolitan Region, 69% of Local Governments would need to spend more than 60% of total estimated revenue raising capacity just to fund the difference between (Federal and State) road grants and road preservation needs<sup>6</sup>. This illustrates the dependence of the vast majority of Local Governments on State funding and the lack of opportunities to increase funding from other sources.

As well as the economic imperative to invest in local roads, there are also important road safety outcomes that can be delivered through an increase in funding through the State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement.

<sup>4</sup> WALGA 2022 Local Government Road Assets and Expenditure Report 2020-21

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Producer Price Indices, Australia Accessed 29 April 2022 at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/producer-price-indexes-australia/latest-release#data-download>

<sup>6</sup> WALGA 2022 Local Government Road Assets and Expenditure Report 2020-21



Approximately 75% of all serious crashes involve a mistake<sup>7</sup> not a breach of road rules. While driver behaviour remains important, a safe system requires that all parts of the system, including roads, roadsides and vehicles work together to eliminate the risk of death and serious injuries from road crashes, despite the fact that drivers are imperfect and make mistakes. Investment through programs within the State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement enable targeted and mass action treatments that respond to the most frequent serious crash types and locations.

Local Government roads carry 44% of total traffic but 58% of all road fatalities and serious injuries occur on roads managed by the sector. The personal tragedy from serious crashes coupled with the \$2.4 billion per year burden on the community through health, emergency response and broader economic costs means we must continue to improve the system.

The current State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement is due to be renewed in June 2023, providing the opportunity to review how revenue raised from motorists through vehicle licensing fees is applied to deliver critical maintenance and improvements to the 87% of the public road network that is managed by Local Governments.

The Local Government share of motor vehicle licensing revenue was cut from 27% to 20% as part of temporary budget repair measures by the previous government. There is clear evidence that by 2027-28, 27% of licence fee revenue will be required to sustainably fund essential Local Government road maintenance and network development needs in order to support industry and improved safety outcomes.

WALGA is seeking the return of Local Government's share of motor vehicle licensing revenue to 27% over the course of the next State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement, and the inclusion of provisions related to:

- furthering Aboriginal participation in the roads industry
- rolling out widespread, low-cost road safety treatments as part of routine renewal works
- investigating the potential for recycled materials to be used in Local Government roads

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<sup>7</sup> Driving Change Road Safety Strategy for Western Australia 2020 – 2030 p16 Accessed at: [https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2021-07/Driving-Change-Road-Safety-Strategy-2020\\_2.pdf](https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2021-07/Driving-Change-Road-Safety-Strategy-2020_2.pdf)

## **Provide Training for Building Surveyors**

Address skills shortages through the creation of a training program for Local Government building surveyors

### **Funding Required**

\$6.5 million between 2023-24 and 2024-25, to support \$75,000 a year for 40 Local Government building surveyor positions.

### **Program Benefits**

- Address critical area of skills shortage
- Support activity in the construction sector as a key part of the State's post-COVID19 recovery and diversification of the economy
- Provide career opportunities in regional areas, in line with the State's Regional Development Strategy, to develop local capability,
- Support the implementation of the State's building regulation reforms

### **Summary**

Local Governments have reported skills and labour shortages across a range of different roles, such as Environment Health officers, finance, pool managers and CEOs.

An area of critical shortages that has been identified across the state is building surveyors. This state-wide shortage has occurred at a time where significant increases in workloads are being experienced due to the high levels of activity in the construction sector. Combined with the low level of recruitment into the building surveyor profession and the ageing workforce, this has significant implications for Local Governments' current statutory obligations and the implementation of the State's building reforms in the years ahead. It also has the potential to inhibit activity in the construction sector into the future.

The Department of Training and Workforce and Development's *State Priority Occupation List 2021*<sup>8</sup> identifies building surveyors as a State Priority 1, and notes that there is high level of demand, ongoing difficulty in filling positions, and challenges in attracting young people to the profession. These trends are expected to continue for at least the next three years.

In a recent survey undertaken by WALGA, approximately half of the Local Government building surveyors that responded indicated they planned to leave the industry sometime in the next five years. This would represent a loss of over 1,200 years of experience sector wide.

These challenges are not unique to WA, with similar trends observed across Australia. The Australian Institute of Building Surveyors has been reporting a national shortage of building surveyors since at least 2015.

Other States have begun to act in response to these trends. In 2021, the Victorian Government established the Women Building Surveyors Program to help meet skills shortage in Building Surveying and drive construction stimulus projects. This program funded 40 women to enrol in an accredited training course, gain work experience with their Local Government and attend other development opportunities. This program prioritised existing Local Government officers in regional areas, to encourage upskilling of existing regional based employees, who are more likely to remain in these areas. According to the State Government of Victoria, this program is fully subscribed.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Training and Workforce and Development, 2021, *State Priority Occupation List*

<sup>9</sup> Media Release, Premier of Victoria, *Forty New Jobs for Women Building Surveyors*, January 2021. Accessed 8 August 2022 from [Forty New Jobs For Women Building Surveyors | Premier of Victoria](#)

A career in Local Government needs promotion backed by education opportunities of the various skills required. For building surveyors, this will be particularly important given that there is an increasing focus on Local Government building departments to deliver good governance, local leadership and sustainable services that meet the needs of their communities whilst supporting local jobs and economic growth and diversification. Assessments of the effectiveness of building control systems across Australia, including in the Building Confidence Report, have recognised the diminishing public confidence in the building and construction industry and that change is required to ensure buildings are safe and perform to expected standards.

Considering evidence that the building surveyor profession is experiencing a degree of structural and market-driven disruption relative to other occupations in WA, and the likelihood the State's building reforms will place additional requirements and expectations on Local Government building surveyors, WALGA is seeking funding in the 2023-24 Budget for the State Government to establish a similar program in Western Australia. The funding request for \$6.5 million would provide \$75,000 a year for two years for 40 Local Government building surveyor positions across WA. The funding request includes the cost of managing the scheme.

The funding would be used to pay for candidates to study an Advanced Diploma of Building Surveying or Bachelor of Building Surveying, gain paid work experience with their Local Governments as well as attend professional development events and other training opportunities.

## TAKING ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a significant threat to our wellbeing, economy and the environment.

There is clear evidence that climate change is occurring and is making communities vulnerable to hotter temperatures, more extreme weather events, and damage to infrastructure.

It is predicted that average annual temperatures across WA will increase by 1.1 to 2.7°C in a medium-emission scenario, and 2.6 to 5.1°C in a high-emission scenario by the end of this century.<sup>10</sup>

We are already experiencing more frequent extreme weather events in WA, with recent examples including the 2021 Wooroloo bushfire and Tropical Cyclone Seroja. These events had a devastating impact on many communities across the state and cost hundreds of millions of dollars in repair and recovery.

Addressing the causes and impacts of climate change requires a collaborative effort across all three levels of government, business and our communities.

Local Governments are actively working to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, engage in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities and have an important role to support their communities to prepare for the impacts of climate change. The sector also provides education and encourages awareness and behaviour change amongst residents.

With the number and severity of extreme weather events set to rise going forward, protecting communities from the impacts of bushfires, floods, and sea-level rise – and helping them adapt to climate change – must be priorities.

Focussing on mitigation and adaptation will reduce the risks faced by communities, as well as reducing the need for recovery funding after a disaster has occurred. Research by the Productivity Commission shows that more resilient communities that invest in prevention and preparedness up front are likely to experience lower costs related to disasters.<sup>11</sup>

While Local Governments are already playing a lead role in delivering climate change initiatives, additional support from the State Government will accelerate the benefits that communities experience from the programs that are currently underway.

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<sup>10</sup> Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, 2021, *Climate Projections for Western Australia*. Accessed 2 August 2022 from <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/climate-change/climate-projections-western-australia>

<sup>11</sup> Productivity Commission, 2014, *Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements*, Inquiry Report No. 74, Vol. 2, p. 373.

## **State Urban Forest Strategy and Urban Greening Grant Program**

Develop a State Urban Forest Strategy and expand the Urban Canopy Grant Program to facilitate the planting of 60,000 trees

### **Funding Required**

\$20 million between 2023-24 and 2026-27

### **Program Benefits**

- Increase climate change resilience
- Reduce the impact of urban heat on vulnerable communities
- Improve liveability and amenity of metropolitan and regional urban centres
- Engagement and involvement of volunteers and the corporate sector

### **Summary**

Trees in urban areas are a key climate change adaptation and mitigation measure.

Higher temperatures are a significant contributor to negative health outcomes and exacerbate cost of living pressures. These impacts fall disproportionately on the most disadvantaged groups in society.<sup>12</sup> Cities are on average 1°C to 3°C hotter than rural areas as a result of the urban heat island effect caused by the prevalence of heat absorbing materials used in roads and buildings.<sup>13</sup>

The shading and cooling provided by trees reduces the urban heat island effect and delivers a broader range of benefits for local communities including improved neighbourhood liveability and amenity, better air quality, biodiversity conservation and positive impacts on psychological and emotional wellbeing.

Tree canopy across the Perth and Peel regions is declining, largely through land clearing for development on private land. The 2017 report *Where should all the trees go?* showed an overall decline in established vegetation across Perth and Peel between 2009 and 2016 and that 41% of all Local Governments in WA had experienced a significant loss of tree canopy. 85% of this canopy loss had occurred on private land.

Local Governments recognise the importance of maintaining canopy cover across their suburbs and are taking action to reduce tree loss on private land and implementing tree planting programs on street verges, parks and other public areas.

The State Government's recent changes to the WA State Planning Framework to preserve existing trees and include additional trees in new developments are welcome, however, as recommended by Infrastructure WA, further review of existing planning policy settings with regards to the treatment of trees in new greenfield and infill developments is needed.

Existing measures will not be enough to reverse urban canopy decline. A comprehensive strategy accompanied by a significant investment in tree planting is required.

This is acknowledged in the State Infrastructure Strategy, which recommends the development of an overarching urban forest strategy, including expanding the Urban Canopy Grant Program, partnering with Local Governments, community groups and land managers in the strategy rollout,

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<sup>12</sup> Tong S, Prior J, McGregor G, Shi X, Kinney P., 2021, *Urban heat: an increasing threat to global health* BMJ; 375 :n2467 doi:10.1136/bmj.n2467

<sup>13</sup> Government of New South Wales, 2022, *Climate Change Impacts on Urban Heat*. Accessed 2 August 2022 from <https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/urban-heat>

and a review of the current policy settings around the treatment of trees, particularly in greenfield and infill developments.

WALGA is seeking funding in the 2023-24 Budget for an expanded Local Government Urban Forest Grant Program for metropolitan and regional urban centres which would focus on tree planting in areas of low canopy cover and increased exposure to heat. Through this program, funds would be provided to Local Governments, through a competitive grant program, to be spent on tree purchase, planting and associated works to support ongoing tree health.

## ***Protect priority coastal erosion hotspots***

Provide additional funding to support Local Governments to complete and implement coastal hazard risk assessment and adaptation plans (CHRMAP) to address priority coastal erosion hotspots

### **Funding Required**

\$55 million between 2023-24 and 2026-27 to be allocated to the Coastal Adaptation and Protection Fund

### **Program Benefits**

- Protect valuable coastal infrastructure to enable recreation, tourism and other economic activities
- Support a strategic approach to coastal erosion management and coastal adaptation across WA
- Manage and adapt to coastal hazard threats and pressures in line with the WA Coastal Zone Strategy and State Planning Policy

### **Summary**

Climate change induced sea level rise presents a real and direct threat to the liveability of our communities. Adequate planning and action are required now to ensure our cities, towns and regions remain resilient to these challenges.

Sea level in WA is projected to be at least 0.9m higher in 2100 compared to 1990 levels, meaning that coastal settlements are highly vulnerable to both coastal erosion and inundation. The *IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report* indicates that even if warming is limited to 1.5°C, sea levels will still rise by about two to three metres globally.<sup>14</sup>

The intensity of storm events will also increase, leading to acute erosion and inundation events along the coast. Most of WA's urban centres are found on the coast, and coupled with the low lying and sandy nature of the Swan Coastal Plain, population centres in the South-West are particularly vulnerable to storm tide inundation. Historical development trends also mean that erosion and inundation are significant threats to critical infrastructure including ports and roads, public assets, private dwellings and natural coastal ecosystems.

A total of 55 locations (15 metropolitan and 40 regional) have been identified as 'coastal erosion hotspots' by the State Government. Hotspots are where coastal erosion is expected to impact public and private physical assets and require management and adaptation action within 25 years. An additional 31 locations (eight metropolitan and 23 regional) have been placed on a watch-list for future consideration. The State Government is also currently mapping coastal inundation hotspots.

In 2019, the State Government estimated the cost of managing the 55 hotspots at \$110 million over the next five years, with greater funding required over the medium to long-term. Infrastructure WA has also identified the need to improve climate change adaptation response within State Government and across infrastructure sectors, including vulnerability to increased coastal inundation and erosion.<sup>15</sup> Further, Infrastructure Australia has recently identified a national coastal erosion strategy on its Infrastructure Priority List.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022, *Sixth Assessment Report*. Accessed 1 August 2022 from [Sixth Assessment Report — IPCC](#)

<sup>15</sup> Infrastructure WA, 2022, *Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow*. Accessed 1 August 2022 from [2022 Final SIS.pdf \(infrastructure.wa.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> Infrastructure WA, 2022, *Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow*. Accessed 1 August 2022 from [2022 Final SIS.pdf \(infrastructure.wa.gov.au\)](#)

Local Government has a significant role in planning for and addressing predicted erosion and inundation hazards. State Planning Policy 2.6 requires Local Governments to prepare coastal hazard risk management and adaptation plans (CHRMAP) to address coastal erosion and inundation. The State has similar responsibilities for land it manages. However, the cost to manage these hotspots is well beyond the financial and technical capacity of Local Government. Under the Coastal Adaptation and Protection (CAP) and other CoastWA grants, the State Government provides Local Governments with grants to assist with coastal management and adaptation.

While funding for both CAP and CoastWA increased significantly in 2020-21, the amount available to local coastal managers remains well below the State Government's estimate of what is required to effectively manage the identified hotspots and create climate resilient communities.

In the 2023-24 Budget, WALGA is seeking increased funding to CAP Grants, and predominantly the *Hotspot Coastal Adaptation and Protection (H-CAP) Major Project Fund*, to \$55 million over four years.

WALGA is also seeking a commitment from the State Government to support ongoing efforts to manage coastal erosion and inundation at a national level, including leveraging Commonwealth funding, and the development of a national approach that establishes equitable funding models to manage and adapt to coastal hazards.



### ***Increase Local Government Grant Scheme funding***

An increase in Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGGS) funding to meet the current and future emergency response capability needs of Bush Fire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Services (SES), to prepare a comprehensive asset management plan for Local Government emergency services facilities and equipment and to meet increased work health and safety requirements.

#### **Funding Required**

- Immediate allocation of \$5.9 million in capital grants in 2023-24 to clear the backlog of unsuccessful 2020-21 LGGGS capital grants applications
- Allocation for the preparation of a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan for Local Government emergency services facilities and equipment
- Immediate increase in annual LGGGS operating grant budget of \$2.75 million from 2023-24 to support Local Governments to meet increased Work Health and Safety requirements, the delivery of training and to support flexible small asset purchases depending on local requirements

These initiatives should be funded by the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) in the first instance, or through consolidated revenue if ESL funds are not available.

#### **Program Benefits**

- Enhance community preparedness for disasters and emergencies
- Support operating and capital requirements for Bush Fire Brigades and State Emergency Services, including facilities, appliances, and operating expenses
- Ensure WA emergency services personnel have access to contemporary and fit for purpose equipment to respond to incidents ranging from bushfires, floods and storms to road crashes
- Support Local Governments to ensure that Bush Fire Brigades function and operate in accordance with new Work Health and Safety legislation

#### **Summary**

With the predicted increase in extreme weather events in WA, there is a pressing need to enhance community preparedness for disasters and emergencies and ensure that emergency services personnel have access to the necessary equipment to respond to incidents.

WA Local Governments manage 563 Bush Fire Brigades (BFB) and administer funding for both BFBs and State Emergency Services (SES) units which is provided through the Local Government Grant Scheme LGGGS. The LGGGS is funded by the ESL and has two components:

- **Capital grants** for significant capital works initiatives, including facilities, appliances, vehicles and major items of equipment; and
- **Operating grants** for general operating costs and minor purchases including fleet and facility maintenance, training, PPE, insurances, and other minor non-recurrent items.

There is a need to ensure that the funding provided through the LGGGS is sufficient to meet the current and future emergency response capability of BFB and SES.

LGGGS funding has not kept pace with increasing costs of assets and the scheme is currently oversubscribed. There is no centralised comprehensive asset management plan for Local Government emergency services facilities or equipment for BFBs or SES, which means that

future funding requirements are unclear. Furthermore, Work Health and Safety legislation has increased the obligations on Local Governments with respect to their management of BFBs.

WALGA is seeking funding in the 2023-24 State Budget for a number of initiatives over the forward estimate period to ensure that LGGs funding is sufficient to meet the current and future requirements of BFB and SES units.

#### Funding the backlog of capital grant applications in 2020-21

Since the LGGs commenced, applications for renovation, replacement or additions to BFB facilities have exceeded the available funding in 18 out of 19 years, and funding requests for appliances have exceeded the available funding every year. LGGs funding that was established in 2003-04 has not kept pace with cost increases. It is expected that cost pressures will continue to increase, including from:

- more frequent and intense natural disasters occurring throughout the State, and
- more stringent safety standards and legislative requirements such as in the new *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*.

Despite an increase in LGGs funding over the years, funding has not grown at a sufficient rate to account for the increasing costs of assets, in particular buildings and vehicles and external cost pressures, or the increasing need for equipment in light of the increasing frequency and severity of bushfires, and the longer northern and southern fire seasons.

The LGGs allocation for 2020-21 totalled \$35 million, comprising \$12 million in operating grants and \$23 million in capital grants. A further \$11.9 million of capital grant funding applications were not funded due to lack of funds. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) sought additional funding under the COVID-19 WA Recovery Plan for the unfunded applications for the 2020-21 LGGs capital grants funding round. DFES received \$6 million of funding, leaving a gap of \$5.9 million in unfunded applications.

An allocation of \$5.9 million in 2023-24 will enable the funding of those capital grant applications in full.

#### Comprehensive Asset Management Plan

Currently there is no centralised comprehensive asset management plan for Local Government emergency services facilities or equipment for BFBs or SES, as this information is contained within each Local Governments' asset management register.

Funding in the 2023-24 Budget is needed for an audit of existing buildings, facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment for BFBs and SES units to inform the preparation of a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan to guide future funding requests.

The Comprehensive Asset Management Plan will assist in forecasting the emergency response requirements of communities across WA over the next 10 years, and the modifications, replacements and additions required to fulfil this demand. The Plan should also investigate the extent to which BFB and SES facilities can be co-located or integrated with other infrastructure needs and existing infrastructure.

#### Additional operating grant funding of \$2.75 million annually

WALGA is seeking an increase of \$2.75 million in annual operating grant funding through the LGGs. This would enable each of the 563 BFBs across the State to receive an extra \$5,000 annually for operational costs.

The new Work Health and Safety legislation has increased the obligations on Local Governments with respect to their management of BFBs. In particular, Local Governments must ensure that BFBs are adequately trained and resourced to undertake their work in a safe way.

## **Expand the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program**

Funding to expand the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program to all interested Local Governments

### **Funding Required**

Funding allocated to the expansion of the CESM program through a staged approach across the forward estimates:

- Stage 1 expansion of the CESM Program to an additional 30 Local Governments that manage volunteer Bush Fire Brigades. This would require an additional \$3 million annually from 2023-24
- Stage 2 expansion of the CESM Program to other interested Local Governments that do not manage volunteer Bush Fire Brigades. This would require a further \$1.4 million annually from 2026-27

The CESM Program should be fully funded by the ESL (with additional funds from other revenue sources if required).

Once the CESM Program is expanded to all Local Governments with an interest in participating and fully funded by the State Government, the estimated annual cost is approximately \$8 million.

### **Program Benefits**

- Support Local Governments and their communities to effectively prevent, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies
- Enhance emergency management skills and capability in the Local Government sector
- Support a best practice partnership approach to emergency management delivery between State and Local Government

### **Summary**

With extreme weather events occurring more frequently and with greater intensity due to climate change, Local Governments are requiring enhanced skills and capability to undertake their extensive emergency management responsibilities.

The Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) program was launched in 2003 by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) to provide Local Governments and Bush Fire Brigade volunteers with an enhanced and comprehensive approach to bushfire risk management<sup>17</sup> through the appointment of CESMs. The program was expanded in 2007 to encompass an all-hazards approach across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR).

The CESM program is designed to bolster Local Government emergency management capability to deliver services to support community resilience including undertaking community preparedness and engagement activities, bushfire risk management, LGGs funding applications and acquittals, management and training of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades, and supporting the implementation and review of Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA).

Currently, 35 CESM positions across WA support 56 Local Governments pursuant to varying cost sharing arrangements between each Local Government and DFES, depending on the Band of each Local Government. In 2021, WALGA undertook a Local Government Emergency Management Survey. Results indicated that Local Governments that participate in the CESM Program generally feel more confident about their management of Bush Fire Brigades, compared

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<sup>17</sup> Department of Fire and Emergency Services, 2021, *Community Emergency Service Managers Reference Manual*

to Local Governments without a CESM. The Survey responses also indicated that at least an additional 24 Local Governments that manage Bush Fire Brigades are interested in participating in the CESM program.

The CESM Program should be extended to all Local Governments that wish to participate. Additionally, each CESM should service no more than two Local Governments, to ensure they are able to discharge their responsibilities adequately.

Expanding the CESM program to all Local Governments will support the Local Government sector to discharge their emergency management responsibilities and support the resilience and preparedness of local communities. Additionally, the CESM Program supports enhanced emergency management capability of Local Governments and in particular bolsters their resources to manage volunteer Bush Fire Brigades, an increasingly resource intensive obligation in light of enhanced safety standards and legislative requirements such as the new *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*.

Recognising current labour market shortages, WALGA is seeking an expansion of the CESM Program in two stages, to be fully funded by the State Government through the ESL. Initially, the CESM Program should be expanded over the next two years to all Local Governments that manage Bush Fire Brigades and wish to participate. A total of 111 Local Governments manage Bush Fire Brigades, with 56 Local Governments already supported by 35 existing CESM positions. Therefore, the addition of a further 30 CESM positions would enable this expansion as well as an adjustment so that no CESM covers more than two Local Governments. The estimated cost for this is \$3 million annually.

The next phase would involve expanding the program to remaining Local Governments that do not manage Bush Fire Brigades but wish to participate in the Program. It is estimated that this would require the creation of a further 14 CESM positions for the remaining 28 Local Governments. The estimated cost for this phase is a further \$1.4 million annually.

## ***Increase funding for the Mitigation Activity Funding Grant Program***

Increase funding and scope for the Mitigation Activity Funding (MAF) Grant Program to reduce bushfire risk

### **Funding Required**

\$10 million annually from 2023-24, comprising \$5 million from the ESL, and the reinstatement of \$5 million annually from the Royalties for Regions Program

### **Program Benefits**

- Support Local Governments to carry out essential mitigation works on Crown Land to reduce bushfire risk to local communities.
- Fund the preparation of improved and safer access to and from land during bushfire response activities.
- Support collaboration between key stakeholders in management of bushfire risk in WA

### **Summary**

Climate change is leading to an increase in frequency and intensity of bushfires in WA, as well as longer northern and southern fire seasons. The funding of critical bushfire risk mitigation treatments is essential in order to reduce the risk to WA communities and natural environments.

Under the *State Hazard Plan – Fire*, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner through DFES has overall responsibility for the prevention and mitigation of the hazard of fire and Local Government and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions have supporting roles in fire prevention and mitigation, particularly in the application of treatments to reduce bushfire risk.

In WA, land owners and occupiers are responsible for managing bushfire fuels on their land and requirements to do so are published by Local Governments in their annual fire management notice. State Government agencies that manage land are not legally required to comply with fire management notices, although they have a legal and moral obligation to take reasonable steps to prevent bushfires on their lands, including by managing fuels. Local Governments are responsible for fuel management on all lands vested in them, including parks, reserves and other managed land.

Mitigation Activity Fund grants (MAF grants) are available to Local Governments that have an endorsed Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRMP). The DFES-run program aims to support Local Governments in identifying high risk assets in their communities and designating options for treatment. Activities that can be undertaken as part of the MAF grants include building fire breaks, reducing fuel loads and carrying out hazard reduction burns. Completing these treatments during the cooler months is crucial for reducing the risk of intense bushfire behaviours in the high threat season. Therefore, it is imperative that Local Governments continue to be supported in their efforts to reduce fuel loads and bushfire risks and protect communities and natural environment.

MAF funding has not changed since 2016, despite a significant increase in the number of Local Governments with endorsed BRMPs. For example, in 2021-22 72 Local Governments were eligible for MAF funding. In 2022-23 this number has grown to 85.

Currently, the MAF Grants are funded through a combination of the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) and Royalties for Regions (RfR). Since the program's inception in 2017, around \$38.6 million funding has supported 55 Local Governments to conduct nearly 5,100 mitigation activities

to protect their communities<sup>18</sup>. \$30 million of this funding is from RfR with the current RfR funding due to conclude in 2023-24.

WALGA is seeking the RfR funding be reinstated at \$5 million annually from 2023-24 and a commitment of \$5 million of Emergency Services Levy funding annually, to support Local Governments to carry out priority mitigation works to reduce bushfire risk and prepare improved and safer access to bushfire prone areas.

The scope of MAF grants should also be reviewed, given that many other important aspects of bushfire risk management are not currently eligible for funding including communication, education and engagement with community and stakeholders to support preparedness, training of staff, and policy and procedure development.

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<sup>18</sup> Media release, Premier of Western Australia, *Major boost to help Local Governments reduce bushfire risks.* Accessed 2 August 2022 from <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2022/07/Major-boost-to-help-local-governments-reduce-bushfire-risks.aspx>

## INVESTING IN THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF WESTERN AUSTRALIANS

All Western Australians, regardless of where they live, have in common a desire to enhance their quality of life and wellbeing, allowing individuals, families and communities to thrive.

There are many different aspects of wellbeing. Some examples of these are highlighted by the OECD in their Better Life Initiative including health, work-life balance, education, social connection, governance, the environment and personal security.<sup>19</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on critical aspects of wellbeing, including physical health, mental health and social connection. While it is still too early to determine the full impact of the pandemic on communities, there have been a range of studies that have identified some of the adverse impacts on wellbeing resulting from the pandemic. For example, research from the WA Department of Health indicates that COVID-19 led to a greater number of Western Australians engaging in sedentary behaviour and higher alcohol consumption.<sup>20</sup> The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare identified that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased levels of loneliness in the community and a reduction in life satisfaction.<sup>21</sup> There have also been reports about increased mental health emergencies and incidents of family and domestic violence.<sup>22</sup>

The State Government's COVID-19 Recovery Plan, seeks to address these impacts through initiatives such as suicide prevention projects, support for victims of family and domestic violence, mental health, drug and alcohol support.<sup>23</sup>

While it is important to respond to the immediate challenges created by the pandemic, there must also be a focus on programs that will deliver improvements in wellbeing over the longer term.

Liveability is also an important aspect of community wellbeing and building resilience, with clear links between people's overall physical and mental health and the environments in which they live. This has been reinforced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, which notes that the built environment influences health and wellbeing in a number of ways, particularly through activity levels, contact with nature and social interaction.<sup>24</sup> Access to essential services and housing is also a critical priority for our regional, rural and remote communities.

Local Governments are well placed to work with the State Government to identify priority areas of spending to build resilient communities that promote individual and community wellbeing and cohesiveness in daily life.

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<sup>19</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2022, *Better Life Initiative*. Accessed 2 August 2022 from [OECD-Better-Life-Initiative.pdf](#)

<sup>20</sup> Western Australian Department of Health, 2021, *COVID-19 in Western Australia: Bulletin 1: The Impact on Lifestyle*. Accessed 29 July 2022 from [COVID-19 in Western Australia Bulletin 1: The impact on lifestyle \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>21</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021, *Australia's Welfare*. Accessed 28 July 2022 from [Australia's welfare 2021: data insights - Chapter 3 \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> Department of Health, 2021, *COVID-19 Pandemic WA Impact Statement*. Accessed 28 July 2022 from [300721-WA-Impact-Statement-July-2021.pdf \(www.wa.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> Western Australian Government, 2021, *COVID-19 coronavirus: Western Australian Government response*. Accessed 27 July 2022 from [COVID-19 coronavirus: Western Australian Government response \(www.wa.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>24</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2022, *Built Environment and Health*. Accessed 1 August 2022 from [Built environment and health - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)

## ***Improve access to primary health services in regional, rural and remote areas***

Improve coordination between Federal and State Government, Regional Development Australia Boards, and key regional stakeholders to prioritise funding to attract and retain General Practitioners and related primary health services in regional, rural and remote WA.

### **Program Benefits**

- Ensure regional, rural, and remote communities have access to essential primary health care services

### **Summary**

Timely and affordable access to primary health services – General Practitioners (GPs), nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, pharmacists, dentists, and Aboriginal health workers and practitioners – in regional areas of WA is much lower than in metropolitan areas. People in the regions statistically experience higher prevalence of chronic disease and mental health conditions, higher hospital admissions and emergency department attendances<sup>25</sup>. In addition, ambulance services in regional areas are dangerously stretched and rely completely on volunteers.

The sustainability of WA's Health System has been under review since the commencement of the Sustainable Health Review in 2017. The review recognised the increasing prevalence of complex health needs, particularly of those living in rural and remote areas and makes several recommendations to improve equity of health services in regional areas.

Of significant importance is the sustainability of GP practices, particularly sole GP practices, in regional areas. Many are at risk of closing because a large cohort of GPs are reaching retirement age with a limited pool of GPs available to replace them. Additionally, it is widely reported that there is an overreliance on locums to fill vacancies and cover annual leave which is costly and unsustainable. In a regional context the role of a GP in preventing conditions which may require more expensive and intensive care and diverting non-urgent care from emergency departments is critical.

Rural Health West's 2021 Annual Workforce Update indicates that there are 197 General Practices, excluding hospitals, operating across regional WA. Of these 130 (66%) are group practices, 47 (23.9%) are sole practices and 20 (10.2%) are Aboriginal Corporation Controlled Health Services (ACCHS). The Wheatbelt region contains the largest number and proportion of sole practices, with 18 of 34 being sole (52.9%).

The recent Senate Inquiry into the Provision of general practitioner and related primary health services to outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australians - Interim Report, 2022, reported that many GPs and practice managers cannot viably operate a practice on the current Medicare rebates and must charge a co-payment to meet practice costs.<sup>26</sup>

In May 2018, WALGA conducted a Local Government Regional Health Services Survey of to determine service levels, delivery gaps and identify Local Government driven solutions. 91 Local Governments responded to this survey, representing the vast majority of WA's regional, rural and remote Local Governments. Challenges in recruiting and retaining doctors, nurses, and allied health staff was identified as the most significant issue, followed by distance to travel to see a health professional and access to health professionals.

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<sup>25</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022, *Rural and Remote Health*. Accessed 1 August 2022 from Rural and remote health - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare ([aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au))

<sup>26</sup> Parliament of Australia, 2022, *Provision of general practitioner and related primary health services to outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australians - Interim Report*. Accessed 2 August 2022 from [Provision of general practitioner and related primary health services to outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australians - Interim Report – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](https://www.aph.gov.au/~/media/aph/other/senate_inquiry/2022/interim_report/interim_report.pdf)



Issues were also raised around the inadequacy of the emergency service delivery model in regional areas. Regional communities do not have guaranteed access to ambulance services and the majority of the services rely on volunteers. The State Government Standing Committee on Public Administration report on the Delivery of Ambulance Services in WA: Critical Condition, May 2022, identified that 98.5% of the geographic area of the State is not meeting ambulance response times. WALGA supports the report's recommendation to ensure that the Department of Health provides a state-wide ambulance services framework that reduces the inequity between metropolitan and regional WA.<sup>27</sup>

The Survey also identified that, in response to increasing critical shortages of health professionals and increasing medical practice costs, many Local Governments are compelled to enter costly medical contracts to ensure access to primary health services are provided in the area. Lack of housing and accommodation continues to be a significant barrier to the attraction and retention of GPs in regional areas. Local Governments are meeting the costs of housing, vehicles, and medical centre operations, to retain and/or attract GPs to the area.

Critical health infrastructure needs are identified the State Infrastructure Strategy which recommends that gaps in the health service system are addressed by prioritising the finalisation of the WA Health Clinical Services Framework 2014 – 2024 and fast tracking the implementation of the Sustainable Health Review.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the recommendations of the State Infrastructure Strategy and Sustainable Health Review, WALGA acknowledges the State Government Department of Health recruitment drive, the Belong Campaign, which commenced in October 2021, along with the 2022-23 State Budget announcement of additional health infrastructure spending of \$5 million to address urgent and critical staff accommodation issues in regional WA.

While these initiatives are welcomed, greater coordination between Commonwealth and State Governments and key regional stakeholders is needed to address the pressing need to provide adequate funding to retain and attract GPs, and other primary health professionals in regional, rural and remote areas.

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<sup>27</sup> Standing Committee on Public Administration, *Delivery of Ambulance Services in Western Australia: Critical Condition*, 2022, pp 123.

<sup>28</sup> Infrastructure WA, 2022, *Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow*. Accessed 1 August 2022 from [2022 Final SIS.pdf \(infrastructure.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.infrastructure.wa.gov.au/2022-Final-SIS.pdf)

### ***Redefine and increase funding for the Regional Development Assistance Program***

Additional funding for the Regional Development Assistance Program, and redefine the program to:

- Separate projects in smaller towns from projects in larger towns and cities
- Fund a broader range of projects of regional significance, administered through Voluntary Regional Organisations of Councils and Regional Subsidiaries, as they are formed

### **Funding Required**

Additional \$5 million per annum from 2023-24. This will bring total funding for the program to \$9 million per annum

### **Program Benefits**

- Facilitate economic development in regional areas
- Alleviate housing shortages
- Lower costs of the Government Regional Officer Housing program

### **Summary**

The prohibitive costs of water, wastewater and power supply headworks charges associated with land development in regional WA can make creation of new residential or industrial lots unviable for private developers. These charges may be proportional and appropriate in the context of the metropolitan area but are inhibiting development in those regional areas with low land values, including the development of housing for essential State Government staff. The lack of housing and industrial land then constrains economic development in these towns as there is no accommodation available for workers.

The Regional Development Assistance Program (RDAP) provides funding to assist Local Governments to build communities across regional Western Australia. The Program contributes to the cost of headworks and other land development costs in regional areas constrained by a lack of housing and where private development is not viable.

Annual funding for the program of \$4 million has not changed since it was established in 2006. However, over that time the scope of the program has been expanded to include land developments in larger regional cities, resulting in smaller scale projects - critical to local economic development – not being supported.

An additional \$5 million per annum for the RDAP would bring the level of investment in line with the expanded scope of the program.

This initiative will make a significant contribution to achieving the Government's WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030 commitments to:

- a 6% net increase in social homes over the next 10 years (2,600 homes)
- diversifying the rental sector
- supporting home ownership opportunities for people on low to moderate incomes
- improving the availability of liveable designed housing
- building liveable, inclusive and connected communities that improve social and economic participation
- a more integrated approach to housing and service assistance
- creating jobs and contribute to the State's economy.

The requested funding to partly meet headworks charges in targeted regional areas is a highly cost-effective means to achieve these outcomes and should be viewed in the context of the much larger



investments that the State has recently made, such as the \$444 million Housing Stimulus Package announced in June 2020.

In addition, WALGA also supports the State Government reducing headworks charges in some or all regional areas for affordable housing development, taking account of local land markets and other economic conditions.

### **Prepare a Mid-Tier Public Transport Plan and Strategy for greater Perth**

A high-level Mid-Tier Public Transport Plan and Strategy for greater Perth (including cycling and walking connections) to support METRONET, in consultation with relevant Local Governments.

#### **Funding Required**

\$10 million between 2023-24 and 2024-25

#### **Program Benefits**

- Coordinate development to provide certainty to Local Governments and businesses
- Provide quality last-mile connections to a number of METRONET stations and activity centres
- Increase public transport usage
- Reduce pollution and traffic congestion
- Save on road capacity upgrades

#### **Summary**

Alleviating ongoing congestion on our roads, creating a safer and more convenient transport network, and managing population growth in the Perth region are important objectives to ensure the liveability of our suburbs.

Mid-Tier Transport has an important role to play in achieving these objectives, by:

- Bridging the nexus between climate, liveability, congestion and housing diversity and affordability
- Strengthening the METRONET network
- Building a public transport network that will deliver the necessary infrastructure to support Perth's growing population
- Complementing Perth's METRONET and help connect dense urban centres not directly serviced by a major rail route
- Supporting housing affordability by offering transport choices that mean people don't have to live on a train line to save on petrol. More accessible transport allows for the development of diverse housing options that cater to a broader range of the community

Currently there is no comprehensive metropolitan Mid-Tier Public Transport Strategy endorsed for Perth. The creation of such a Strategy will be critical to address the gap in transport planning between METRONET and local area travel plans and will support the delivery of the *Directions 2031 and Beyond* and *Perth @3.5 million* urban infill targets. It also aligns with Infrastructure WA's *Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow (2022)*, that recommended planning for light rail and/or bus rapid transit for the next stage of major project transport priority investment in Perth.<sup>29</sup>

Funding is sought in the 2023-24 Budget for the development of a Mid-Tier Public Transport Strategy. A consortium of 15 Local Governments has formed to develop a preferred network of mid-tier public transport routes intended to complement METRONET by improving connections between rail stations and activity centres, and will be an important stakeholder group in the development of this plan.

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<sup>29</sup> Infrastructure WA, 2022, *Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow*. Accessed 1 August 2022 from [2022 Final SIS.pdf \(infrastructure.wa.gov.au\)](#),

To provide confidence to Local Government and the development industry, the Mid-Tier Public Transport Strategy will need to include as a minimum, the following components:

- the identification of all Mid-Tier Public Transport route alignments within the Perth and Peel area
- all route alignments to be identified at a road level supported by a concept plan that identifies the adaptability of the route for all Mid-Tier Public Transport vehicle options
- the preparation of corridor width plans to identify if widening of existing roads is required
- identification of areas where vehicle maintenance and storage is to occur
- identification of priority routes for implementation and further investigation
- undertaking of traffic and patronage modelling to support route selection
- undertaking land intensity planning to support route selection
- engagement with Local Governments in preparing the strategy
- planning for pedestrian and cycling access to all routes, including connecting railway stations

Completion of the above work in the strategy will enable the Department for Planning, Lands and Heritage to initiate the necessary Metropolitan Region Scheme amendments to confirm the Mid-Tier Public Transport corridors and Local Planning Scheme amendments to confirm the routes and land use planning to support the Mid-Tier Public Transport network. The above work will also enable further business case planning to support priority implementation and funding.

Planning for pedestrian and cycling access is consistent with a number of Government policies, including METRONET's Delivering Successful METRONET Station Precincts; the WA Bike Network Plans "Connecting Stations" initiative; and the Public Transport Authority's Station Access Strategies.

The proposed mid-tier public transport network includes the Fremantle to Cockburn Central and Murdoch links, which were added to the Infrastructure Australia Priority List in June 2022.

### **Contribute funding for the Network Renewal Underground Power program.**

The State Government co-invest with Local Government and Western Power to replace ageing areas of the electricity distribution infrastructure that has reached the end of its service life with underground power, including areas with lower property values and a higher proportion of property owners with lower financial capacity.

#### **Funding Required**

\$34 million per annum from 2024-25

#### **Program Benefits**

- Improve reliability and security of electricity supply for consumers
- Focus on areas with lower property values and property owners with lower financial capacity
- Enhance streetscapes and visual amenity
- Improve street lighting providing safety benefits for pedestrians and other road users
- Reduced street tree maintenance costs and allow more trees to be established to lower heat island effects
- Reduce maintenance and emergency response costs for Western Power

#### **Summary**

Placing powerlines underground significantly improves the reliability of the electricity supply, particular during severe weather events. The State Underground Power Program, which has been in place since 1996, was established in response to major disruptions to power supply in Perth and the south-west of the State resulting from a severe storm. Western Power found that 80% of power failures during that storm were caused by trees and branches falling on power lines. The program has been running successfully, with approximately 60% of Perth properties now having underground power.

A redesigned State Underground Power Program will leverage the significant electricity distribution renewal investment that will be undertaken by Western Power during the next Access Arrangement Period (2022-23 to 2026-27), ensuring that infrastructure is replaced as it reaches the end of its service life and upgraded to cater for the requirements of distributed power generation as set out in the Distributed Energy Resources Roadmap<sup>30</sup>.

Significant parts of the electricity distribution infrastructure in middle ring suburbs have reached the end of their service life and will need to be replaced over the next decade to provide a safe network that can support future use of the grid. This provides an opportunity for Local Governments and the State Government to co-invest with Western Power to secure benefits that simply replacing old poles and wires with new ones will not achieve.

There are a range of benefits from converting to underground electricity distribution, and the Economic Regulation Authority estimated a benefit-cost ratio of between 2.6 and 2.7 based on such projects undertaken between 1996 and 2010.<sup>31</sup> By more strongly aligning with network reinvestment priorities, future projects should achieve a similar or higher net benefit. Western Power is proposing to spend \$685 million over five years replacing overhead distribution poles and conductors with underground power<sup>32</sup>. The proposed State Government funding

<sup>30</sup> Energy Transformation Taskforce, 2019, *Distributed Energy Resources Roadmap* (<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/distributed-energy-resources-roadmap>)

<sup>31</sup> Economic Regulation Authority, 2010, *Inquiry into State Underground Program Cost Benefit Study*.

<sup>32</sup> Western Power, 2022, *Access Arrangement Revisions for the Fifth Access Period*. Accessed 2 August 2022 from <https://www.erawa.com.au/cproot/22418/2/Access-Arrangement-Information-for-the-AA5-Period-1-February-2022-.pdf>

contribution is 25% of the total investment, averaged across all projects. This extension will include areas with lower property values and a higher proportion of property owners with lower financial capacity. The previous program design, requiring property owners to meet the majority of the costs, is unlikely to secure widespread community support in these areas. It is proposed that the State Government contribution will be particularly targeted to these areas.

The proposed investment will replace 876km of electricity distribution conductors with underground power and is a core action proposed by Western Power to deliver on safety and reliable supply objectives<sup>33</sup>. Western Power research highlights community support for investments to improve network resilience in response to extreme climate events including undergrounding<sup>33</sup>.

Outside of security of supply, underground power delivers a range of other benefits including lower maintenance costs, and facilitation of more renewable connections. Undergrounding existing overhead infrastructure also provides better amenity and streetscapes by allowing tree canopy to grow<sup>34</sup>. Western Power highlights the undergrounding program will play a key role in supporting the future uptake of electric vehicles by enhancing capacity on our distribution network to accommodate charging services<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Western Power, 2022, *Access Arrangement Revisions for the Fifth Access Period*. Accessed 2 August 2022 from <https://www.erawa.com.au/cproot/22418/2/Access-Arrangement-Information-for-the-AA5-Period-1-February-2022-.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Western Power, 2022, *Access Arrangement Revisions for the Fifth Access Period*. Accessed 2 August 2022 from <https://www.erawa.com.au/cproot/22418/2/Access-Arrangement-Information-for-the-AA5-Period-1-February-2022-.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Western Power, 2022, *Access Arrangement Revisions for the Fifth Access Period*. Accessed 2 August 2022 from <https://www.erawa.com.au/cproot/22418/2/Access-Arrangement-Information-for-the-AA5-Period-1-February-2022-.pdf>

## DELIVERING A MODERN LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In a constantly evolving society, legislation and regulation needs to keep pace with community values, needs and preferences, technological enhancements and changing business models. This supports an efficient, flexible and competitive economy, as well as ensures safety, social and environmental objectives are met.

Since being elected, the State Government has been progressing an agenda of legislative reform. To ensure that the full benefits of these reforms are realised, it will be necessary to allocate appropriate funding for the implementation of these changes, including support for transition and any recurrent functions that arise out of the reform program.

While reforms to the *Local Government Act 1995* obviously have the most direct impact on Local Governments, the breadth of Local Government responsibilities, including the implementation of various legislative controls, mean reform in other areas also affect the sector. These include the protection of cultural heritage, improving and protecting health and wellbeing, and strengthening disaster resilience and response.



## ***Fund the Establishment of a Chief Inspector of Local Government and Office of the Local Government Inspector***

The establishment of a Chief Inspector of Local Government, supported by an Office of the Local Government Inspector in line with the Local Government legislative reform initiative on Early Intervention and Effective Regulation

### **Funding Required**

\$2.5 million per annum from 2023-24 to create an office of approximately 14 FTE staff including accommodation and travel costs

### **Program Benefits**

- Allow for the smooth implementation of the Local Government legislative reform initiative on Early Intervention and Effective Regulation
- Provide early intervention and capacity building assistance to the Local Government sector
- Save time and money on the current lengthy Local Government.

### **Summary**

The Minister for Local Government has announced that a key platform of the Local Government legislative reform program is “Early Intervention, Effective Regulation and Stronger Penalties”. In this category of reforms, the State Government is planning to establish a Chief Inspector of Local Government (the Inspector), supported by an Office of the Local Government Inspector (the Inspectorate).

In implementing the reforms, the primary area requiring additional funding is the establishment of the Office of the Local Government Inspector. This includes setting up a panel of Monitors to enter a Local Government and try to proactively resolve problems (as opposed to allocating blame or collecting evidence). The Inspectorate would be an independent arm of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, however report to the Director General and be housed within the Department.

WALGA considers an allocation in the order of \$2.5 million per annum will be required to establish the Office, which would provide for approximately 14 FTE staff as well as travel and accommodation. Funding for the Office could be in part provided by reallocating existing resources that are provided for Local Government inquiries.

## **Implement key legislative reform priorities**

Funding to support the implementation of legislative reform priorities, including:

- *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021*
- Public Health Planning under Stage 5 of the *Public Health Act 2016*
- The new *Consolidated Emergency Services Act*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*

## **Resources Required**

Support in the 2023-24 Budget for the implementation of legislative reforms:

- Detailed Consultation and engagement with Local Governments and other relevant stakeholders
- Training and assistance for Local Governments to fulfill their obligations under new legislative frameworks (for example, implementation of Public Health Plans)
- Provision of funding to assist smaller rural and regional Council's with the development of Local Public Health Plans
- The establishment and ongoing functioning of the new Aboriginal heritage system, with respect to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council (ACHC), Local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Services and Local Governments (LACHS)
- Provision of funding for Local Governments to assist in the transition to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*

Total resources required to be determined in consultation with Local Governments, State Government and relevant stakeholders.

## **Program Benefits**

- Enhancing the performance and efficiency of the Local Government sector
- Equitable level of services across the state
- Maximising the benefits of reform

## **Summary**

Local Government is a diverse sector, ranging from large metropolitan cities to very small remote towns. Across the sector there is a range of maturity in governance and administration. Therefore, it is vital that the Government's legislative and regulatory reform program establishes best practice and improves the capacity of Local Governments to provide their communities with an equitable level of services.

Approaches to legislative and regulatory reform that focus on preventative and early interventions such as education, guidance and monitoring are proven to increase Local Government's efficiency and effectiveness and reduce breaches and complaints.

The proposed reforms across the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act*, *Public Health Act 2016*, and *Consolidated Emergency Management Act* (in drafting phase) will have a significant impact on the resources of Local Government, including increased demands on staff time and training requirements. Further, the proposed reforms with the *Public Health Act 2016* and the consolidation of the *Emergency Services Act*, are reliant on Local Government to give effect to the new legislation.

Currently there are no clear strategies aimed at building the capacity of Local Government, to better manage and respond to increasing regulatory requirements and complexity. Funding is being sought in the 2023-24 Budget to assist Local Governments with capacity building in this regard.

The State Government has set a precedent in providing funding support to sectors impacted by significant regulatory reform. By way of example, in 2021 the Department of Mines, Industry

Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) provided \$300,000 funding to peak bodies of significant industries to support the implementation of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* to support legislative reform implementation. The funding was to prepare resources for to assist businesses in updating safety systems and practices. A similar approach could be used to assist Local Governments to meet their obligation under the revised Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, Public Health, and Emergency Services regimes.

In addition to support to Local Governments to fulfil their obligations under the new legislative framework, it is essential that the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council and Local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Services are adequately resourced to enable them to respond to applications for permits and management plans pursuant to the new legislation. The Aboriginal cultural heritage reforms are a significant improvement on the current system, however funding must be allocated to ensure the benefits of these reforms are fully realised.

## 5.2 Proposed Advocacy Position on Management of Bush Fire Brigades (05-024-02-0059 SM)

By Susie Moir, Policy Manager, Resilient Communities

### RECOMMENDATION

That the following Advocacy Position on Management of Bush Fire Brigades be endorsed.

#### **Management of Bush Fire Brigades**

1. ***Bush Fire Brigade volunteers play a critical role in helping to protect their local communities. Local knowledge and skills are integral to bushfire management in Western Australia.***
2. ***Future management and funding of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades must:***
  - a) ***Recognise the changing risk environment, including work health and safety requirements, and the increasing intensity and frequency of bushfires;***
  - b) ***Take account of the differing circumstances of Bush Fire Brigade units and regional variations in bush firefighting approaches; and***
  - c) ***Be adequately and equitably resourced through the Emergency Services Levy.***
3. ***The State Government, through the Consolidated Emergency Services Act and/or other mechanism's must:***
  - a) ***establish a clear framework to enable transfer of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government if a Local Government decides to do so;***
  - b) ***Consult on the process, timeline, and implications for transfer of responsibility for Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with 3(a) through the establishment of a working group comprising representatives of Local Government, Bush Fire Brigades, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES);***
  - c) ***Provide for mandatory and minimum training requirements and recognition of competency and prior learning for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers, supported by a fit-for-purpose and universally accessible training program, designed in consultation with Bush Fire Brigade representatives, Local Government and LGIS, and managed by DFES; and***
  - d) ***Develop a co-designed suite of relevant management guidelines and materials to assist in the management of Bush Fire Brigades.***
4. ***The State Government to consider the most appropriate operational model for State Government management of Bush Fire Brigades, which may include the establishment of an independent Rural Fire Service, as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report.***

#### **Executive Summary**

- Under the Bush Fires Act 1954, Local Governments have responsibility for the establishment and management of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFBs).
- It is timely for the sector to consider its position on the most appropriate future management arrangements for BFBs as:
  - the State Government is currently preparing the *Consolidated Emergency Services Act*, which is expected to be released for consultation in early 2023; and
  - the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act), enacted in March 2022, has raised the sector's concerns regarding risk and liability in the management of BFBs.
- WALGA consulted the sector on this issue from 24 May to 29 July 2022 through a paper, *Arrangements for management of Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position* (the Paper).

- A total of 89 submissions were received from Local Governments, representing 64% of the Local Government sector and 77% of Local Governments that manage BFBs.
- Based on the feedback received, a revised Advocacy Position on Management of BFBs is proposed for State Council consideration.

### Attachment

- Report: Management Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades, August 2022
- [Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position, May 2022](#)

### Policy Implications

WALGA does not currently have an [Advocacy Position](#) on the management of Bush Fire Brigades.

Eight updated Advocacy Position Statements relating to Emergency Management, and an Advocacy Position on the expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program, were endorsed in July 2022.

### Background

The [Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position Paper](#) was developed to obtain feedback from the sector to assist the Association to prepare an Advocacy Position on the management of Bush Fire Brigades.

The Paper outlined four options for future BFB management:

1. **Status quo** – continue with the current arrangements for management of BFBs whereby the majority are managed by Local Government and transfer arrangements are negotiated on an ad hoc basis between DFES and Local Governments (or their BFBs);
2. **Improvements** – continue with the current arrangements for Local Government management of BFBs with additional support provided by the State Government with respect to increased funding and better access to training resources and other support;
3. **Hybrid Model** – Local Government continues to manage BFBs where they have the capacity, capability and resources to do so; however where they do not have the capacity, capability and resources, responsibility for management of BFBs is transferred to DFES; and
4. **Transfer** – Responsibility for management of all BFBs is transferred to the State Government, consistent with the arrangements in other States and Territories.

The Hybrid Model was proposed as most appropriate.

The Paper outlined the rationale for the following proposed Advocacy Position:

#### **Management of Bush Fire Brigades (May 2022)**

1. *The Association advocates that the State Government must provide for:*
  - a) *A clear pathway for Local Governments to transfer responsibility for the management of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government when ongoing management is beyond the capacity, capability and resources of the Local Government;*
  - b) *The co-design of a suite of relevant guidelines and materials to assist those Local Governments that manage Bush Fire Brigades;*
  - c) *Mandatory and minimum training requirements for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers supported by a universally accessible training program managed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES); and*
  - d) *The recognition of prior learning, experience and competency of Bush Fire Brigade volunteers.*
2. *That a Working Group comprising representatives of WALGA and DFES be established to develop a process and timeline for the transfer of responsibility for Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with 1(a).*

3. *Where management of Bush Fire Brigades is transferred to DFES in accordance with 1(a), DFES should be resourced to undertake the additional responsibility.*

The Paper also noted that whatever future management arrangements are in place Local Governments that manage BFBs require additional support and resourcing.

### Comment

A total of 89 submissions were received from Local Governments, representing 64% of the Local Government sector and 77% of Local Governments that manage BFBs. Of these:

- 86 submissions were from Local Governments that manage BFBs (incl. those through an MOU with DFES in Pilbara/ Kimberley); and
- 82 submissions were from regional Local Governments and the remaining from metropolitan Local Governments.

Submissions were received from Local Governments in all WALGA Zones except for the Central Metropolitan Zone and the Kimberley Zone.

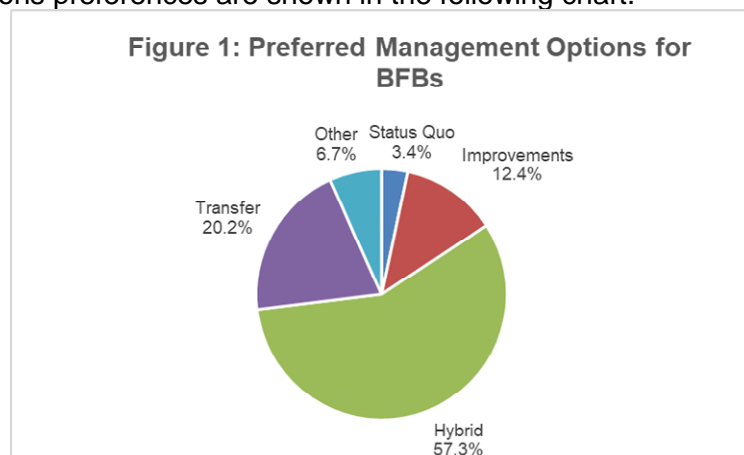
With regard to the proposed Advocacy Position:

- 40 (44.9% of respondents) supported the position in full;
- 12 (13.5%) conditionally support;
- 13 (14.6%) did not support; and
- 24 (27.0%) proposed alternative positions or did not provide direct comment.

With regard to the identified BFB management options:

- Three (3.4% of respondents) supported maintaining the status quo;
- 11 (12.4%) supported improvements to the current arrangements;
- 51 (57.3%) supported the hybrid model; and
- 18 (20.2%) supported a full transfer to the State Government.

BFB management options preferences are shown in the following chart.



Local Governments also provided comment regarding:

- the importance of Bush Fire Brigades and volunteers;
- the need for additional resources and funding to increase Local Governments' capability to effectively manage BFBs;
- concerns with the WHS Act and the risk profile of BFBs
  - many indicated that additional resources are needed to assist Local Government with respect to the discharge of their obligations under the WHS Act; and
  - some proposed the WHS legislation should be amended to reduce liability;
- strong support for the continuation and expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program;

- the importance of retaining local bushfire management knowledge whether BFBs are managed by Local Government or the State Government, and that non-BFB management responsibilities of Local Governments under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, require further consideration; and
- the need for further consideration of an operational model for the management of BFBs under the State Government, including an independent Rural Fire Service as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report.

In considering the preferences expressed and issues raised in Local Governments' submissions, the following revised Advocacy Position is proposed:

### **8.10 Management of Bush Fire Brigades**

1. *Bush Fire Brigade volunteers play a critical role in helping to protect their local communities. Local knowledge and skills are integral to bushfire management in Western Australia.*
2. *Future management and funding of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades must:*
  - a) *Recognise the changing risk environment, including work health and safety requirements, and the increasing intensity and frequency of bushfires;*
  - b) *Take account of the differing circumstances of Bush Fire Brigade units and regional variations in bush firefighting approaches; and*
  - c) *Be adequately and equitably resourced through the Emergency Services Levy.*
3. *The State Government, through the Consolidated Emergency Services Act and/or other mechanism's must:*
  - d) *establish a clear framework to enable transfer of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government if a Local Government decides to do so;*
  - e) *Consult on the process, timeline, and implications for transfer of responsibility for Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with 3(a) through the establishment of a working group comprising representatives of Local Government, Bush Fire Brigades, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES);*
  - f) *Provide for mandatory and minimum training requirements and recognition of competency and prior learning for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers, supported by a fit-for-purpose and universally accessible training program, designed in consultation with Bush Fire Brigade representatives, Local Government and LGIS, and managed by DFES; and*
  - g) *Develop a co-designed suite of relevant management guidelines and materials to assist in the management of Bush Fire Brigades.*
4. *The State Government to consider the most appropriate operational model for State Government management of Bush Fire Brigades, which may include the establishment of an independent Rural Fire Service, as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report.*

**Agenda item 5.2**  
**Attachment 1: Management Arrangements for**  
**Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades Report, August 2022**

# **Management Arrangements for Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades**

**August 2022**



## Executive Summary

- Under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, Local Governments have responsibility for the establishment and management of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFBs).
- It is timely for the sector to consider its position on the most appropriate future management arrangements for BFBs as:
  - the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act), enacted in March 2022, has raised the sector's concerns regarding risk and liability in the management of BFBs,
  - the State Government is currently preparing *Consolidated Emergency Services Act*, which is expected to be released for consultation in early 2023.
- WALGA requested sector feedback on this issue through a paper, *Arrangements for Management of Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position* (the Paper) from 24 May to 29 July.
- The paper outlined four options for future BFB management: status quo; improvements; hybrid model; and transfer
  - the Hybrid Model was proposed as most appropriate.
- The Paper also noted that whatever future management arrangements are in place Local Governments that manage BFBs require additional support and resourcing.
- There was a high level of response to the Paper with 89 submissions received, 86 from Local Governments that manage BFBs and 60 of which were Council endorsed.
- With regard to the proposed Advocacy Position:
  - 40 (44.9% of respondents) supported the position in full;
  - 12 (13.5%) conditionally support;
  - 13 (14.6%) did not support; and
  - 24 (27.0%) proposed alternative positions or did not provide direct comment.
- With regard to the identified BFB management options:
  - Three (3.4% of respondents) supported maintaining the status quo;
  - 11 (12.4%) supported improvements to the current arrangements;
  - 51 (57.3%) supported the hybrid model;
  - 18 (20.2%) supported a full transfer to the State Government; and
  - Six (6.7%) indicated that they do not support any proposed option.
- Local Governments also provided comment regarding:
  - the importance of BFBs and volunteers;
  - the need for additional resources and funding to increase Local Governments' capability to effectively manage BFBs;
  - concerns with the Work Health and Safety Act 2020 and the risk profile of BFBs
    - many indicated that additional resources are needed to assist Local Government to meet WHS Act requirements; and
    - some proposed the WHS legislation should be amended to reduce liability;
  - strong support for the continuation and expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program;
  - the importance of retaining local bushfire management knowledge whether BFBs are managed by Local Government or the State Government, and that non-BFB management responsibilities of Local Governments under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, require further consideration; and
  - the need for further consideration of an operational model for the management of BFBs under the State Government, including an independent Rural Fire Service as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report.

In considering the preferences expressed and issues raised in Local Governments' submissions, the following revised Advocacy Position is proposed:

#### **8.10 Management of Bush Fire Brigades**

1. *Bush Fire Brigade volunteers play a critical role in helping to protect their local communities. Local knowledge and skills are integral to bushfire management in Western Australia.*
2. *Future management and funding of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades must:*
  - a) *Recognise the changing risk environment, including work health and safety requirements, and the increasing intensity and frequency of bushfires;*
  - b) *Take account of the differing circumstances of Bush Fire Brigade units and regional variations in bush firefighting approaches; and*
  - c) *Be adequately and equitably resourced through the Emergency Services Levy.*
3. *The State Government, through the Consolidated Emergency Services Act or other mechanism must:*
  - a) *establish a clear framework to enable transfer of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government if a Local Government decides to do so;*
  - b) *Consult on the process, timeline, and implications for transfer of responsibility for Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with 3(a) through the establishment of a working group comprising representatives of Local Government, Bush Fire Brigades, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES);*
  - c) *Provide for mandatory and minimum training requirements and recognition of competency and prior learning for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers, supported by a fit-for-purpose and universally accessible training program, designed in consultation with Bush Fire Brigade representatives, Local Government and LGIS, and managed by DFES; and*
  - d) *Develop a co-designed suite of relevant management guidelines and materials to assist in the management of Bush Fire Brigades.*
4. *The State Government to consider the most appropriate operational model for State Government management of Bush Fire Brigades, which may include the establishment of an independent Rural Fire Service, as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report.*

# 1. Introduction

Western Australian Local Governments have extensive roles and responsibilities across the emergency management spectrum of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, Local Governments have responsibility for the establishment and management of BFBs. Currently, 111 Local Governments manage 563 BFBs involving approximately 20,000 volunteers.

This consultation was in relation to part of the 'response' role of Local Government and did not seek to address the non-BFB related responsibilities of Local Government under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, which rely on local technical bushfire knowledge.

Between May and July 2022, WALGA undertook a consultation with WA Local Governments to inform the preparation of a sector Advocacy Position on the arrangements for the future management of volunteer BFBs.

This Report details the consultation process, feedback received from the sector and proposes a revised Advocacy Position.

## 1.1 Background

In May 2022 WALGA released a paper entitled [Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position](#) (the Paper) to guide the consultation process. Reasons for consulting the sector on this issue included:

- the need for a Position to guide WALGA's advocacy in light of the State Government drafting the Consolidated Emergency Services Act (CES Act), harmonising the *Fire Brigades Act 1942*, *Bush Fires Act 1954* and *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998* into a single piece of legislation, anticipated to be released as a Green Bill for consultation in early 2023;
- feedback received during WALGA's 2021 Local Government Emergency Management Survey indicating concerns within the sector about the current arrangements for managing BFBs; and
- concerns within the sector about the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act), enacted in March 2022, regarding risk and liability in the management of BFBs, resourcing requirements, training and competency.

Consultation commenced on Tuesday, 24 May. The original closing date of Friday, 8 July was extended until Friday, 29 July. Council endorsed positions and engagement with local volunteers and communities was encouraged.

The Paper presented four options for the future management of BFBs:

1. **Status quo** – continue with the current arrangements for management of BFBs whereby the majority are managed by Local Government and transfer arrangements are negotiated on an ad hoc basis between DFES and Local Governments (or their BFBs);
2. **Improvements** – continue with the current arrangements for Local Government management of BFBs with additional support provided by the State Government with respect to increased funding and better access to training resources and other support;
3. **Hybrid Model** – Local Government continues to manage BFBs where they have the capacity, capability and resources to do so; however where they do not have the capacity, capability and resources, responsibility for management of BFBs is transferred to DFES; and
4. **Transfer** – Responsibility for management of all BFBs is transferred to the State Government, consistent with the arrangements in other States and Territories.

The Paper also noted that whatever future management arrangements are in place Local Governments with responsibility for management of BFBs require additional support and resourcing, including:

- development of guidelines and resources to assist Local Governments in their management of BFBs, particularly with respect to the discharge of obligations under the WHS Act;
- expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program so that every Local Government with responsibility for managing BFBs has access to the Program if they wish to participate;
- universal access to DFES training for BFBs; and
- development of mandatory and minimum training requirements including recognition of competency for volunteers.

The following Advocacy Position was proposed:

***Management of Bush Fire Brigades (May 2022)***

- 1. The Association advocates that the State Government must provide for:*
  - a) A clear pathway for Local Governments to transfer responsibility for the management of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government when ongoing management is beyond the capacity, capability and resources of the Local Government;*
  - b) The co-design of a suite of relevant guidelines and materials to assist those Local Governments that manage Bush Fire Brigades;*
  - c) Mandatory and minimum training requirements for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers supported by a universally accessible training program managed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES); and*
  - d) The recognition of prior learning, experience and competency of Bush Fire Brigade volunteers.*
- 2. That a Working Group comprising representatives of WALGA and DFES be established to develop a process and timeline for the transfer of responsibility for Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with 1(a).*
- 3. Where management of Bush Fire Brigades is transferred to DFES in accordance with 1(a), DFES should be resourced to undertake the additional responsibility.*

The Paper posed the following questions:

1. Does your Local Government manage BFBs?
2. Does your Local Government support the proposed Advocacy Position on arrangements for the management of BFBs? Why or why not?
3. Does your Local Government have any further suggestions or changes to the proposed Advocacy Position?
4. For Local Governments that manage BFBs, is your Local Government's preference to continue to manage BFBs or to transfer responsibility to the State Government?
5. Is your response endorsed by Council? If so, please include the Council paper and resolution.
6. Do you have any further comments to make?

## 2. Summary of findings

### 2.1 Submissions received

A total of 89 submissions were received, representing 64% of the Local Government sector and 77% of Local Governments that manage BFBs. Of these:

- 60 submissions were formally Council endorsed;
- 86 submissions were from Local Governments that manage BFBs (including those through an MOU with DFES); and
- 82 submissions were from regional Local Governments and the remaining from metropolitan Local Governments.

There was participation from Local Governments in all WALGA Zones except for the Central Metropolitan Zone and the Kimberley Country Zone.

Submissions were provided via a variety of methods:

- response to the consultation survey;
- direct written response to the consultation questions/ submission or provision of a Council decision; and
- general commentary on the matter via email or letter.

In addition to their view on the proposed Advocacy Position and preferred management option, many Local Governments provided other insights and feedback, including their own Local Government's preference for future BFB management, work health and safety, training and equipment, funding and a governance structure to coordinate ongoing engagement. This feedback has informed the revised Advocacy Position.

### 2.2 Feedback on the Proposed Advocacy Position

Feedback on the proposed Advocacy Position was as follows:

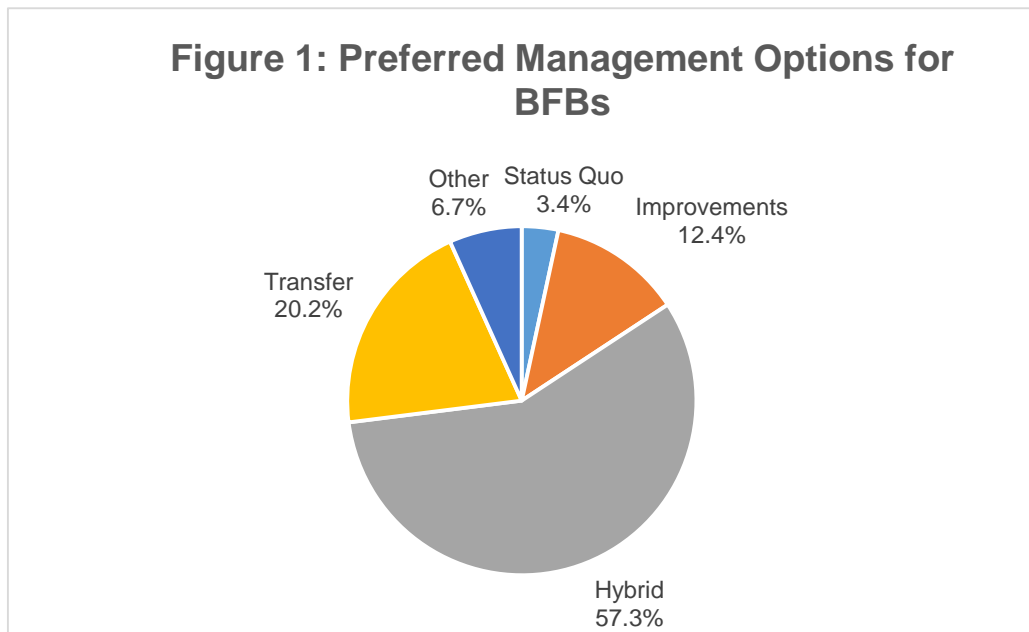
- 40 Local Governments, 44.9% of respondents indicated support in full;
- 12 Local Governments, or 13.5% conditionally support;
- 13 Local Governments, or 14.6% indicated they do not support; and
- 24 Local Governments, or 27% Local Governments have proposed alternative positions or not provided direct comment on the proposed position.

## 2.3 Feedback on Preference for the Management of Bush Fire Brigades

### 2.3.1 Preferred Management Model

The Paper provided four potential options for the future management of BFBs – Status Quo, Improvements, Hybrid Model and Transfer. As anticipated, there were mixed views from the sector on a preferred option.

Three (3.4% of respondents) supported maintaining the status quo; 11 (12.4%) supported improvements to the current arrangements; 51 (57.3%) supported the hybrid model; and 18 (20.2%) supported a full transfer to the State Government; and (see Figure 1).



### 2.3.2 Feedback on the Four Management Options presented in WALGA’s Paper

#### Option One: Status Quo

Only 3.4%, or three Local Governments expressed a preference for the Status Quo. Reasons for this position included that that they had positive working relationships with their BFBs, and considered their current resourcing levels to be adequate.

*“The City is happy with the current relationship maintained between DFES and the City and the service provided to the bushfire brigades and by the bushfire brigades to the community.”*  
Band 1, metropolitan Local Government

#### Option Two: Improvements

11 responses (12.4%) supported Local Government retaining responsibility for management of BFBs with improvements. These Local Governments considered that it was appropriate for Local Government to continue to manage BFBs, but that the provision of additional resources particularly through the Emergency Services Levy (ESL), Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGs) and CESM Program were essential to support Local Governments in managing BFBs.

*“It is important the Local Governments have the ability to determine what is best for their local communities. However it is also important that Bush Fire Brigades are well resourced and managed to provide the best service possible. Further support by the State Government for Bush Fire Brigade management is essential.”*  
Band 3, regional Local Government

### Option Three: Hybrid Model

51 responses (57.3%) supported a Hybrid Model. Many submissions were based on the principle of self-determination, being that regardless of their own Local Government's preference to continue to manage BFBs or not, a Hybrid Model was supported to empower each Local Government to determine their own local situation and requirements, and enable the transition of management to the State Government for those that determined it to be appropriate.

*“Council supports the transition to a hybrid model where Local Governments have the ability to transfer brigade management to DFES where there is significant support and resource to better implement the move to a more structured brigade response regime.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

Concerns expressed about the Hybrid Model included the potential for:

- decreased ESL/Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGs) funding being allocated to Local Governments that continued to manage BFBs;
- confusion about the continuing roles and responsibilities of Local Government in relation to bushfire management;
- detrimental impact to BFB operations due to inefficiencies of split responsibilities; and
- impact on the CESM program, which was initially established to supplement Local Government bushfire preparedness and response capability.

Presently, DFES manages BFBs in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions pursuant to Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) arrangements with relevant Local Governments. This MOU arrangement is essentially a Hybrid Model delivered through a MOU as the current *Bush Fires Act 1954* does not support the arrangement.

A number of MOU Local Governments responded to the consultation in support of the MOU approach.

*“This was an outcome that we fought hard to achieve on the basis that DFES are subject matter experts in this area and best placed to provide the operational support required. As expected this arrangement has worked well and we would recommend the approach to others. Whilst we are happy with the transition of the daily management to DFES the MOU still sees the City with responsibility for the maintenance of the Brigades facilities and assets and the administration of budgets, grants and funding applications. We question the need for Local Governments to be involved in these matters as it seems to only create additional administration for all parties. It would be our preference and recommendation that the State, via DFES take over all aspects of the management of these Brigades.”*

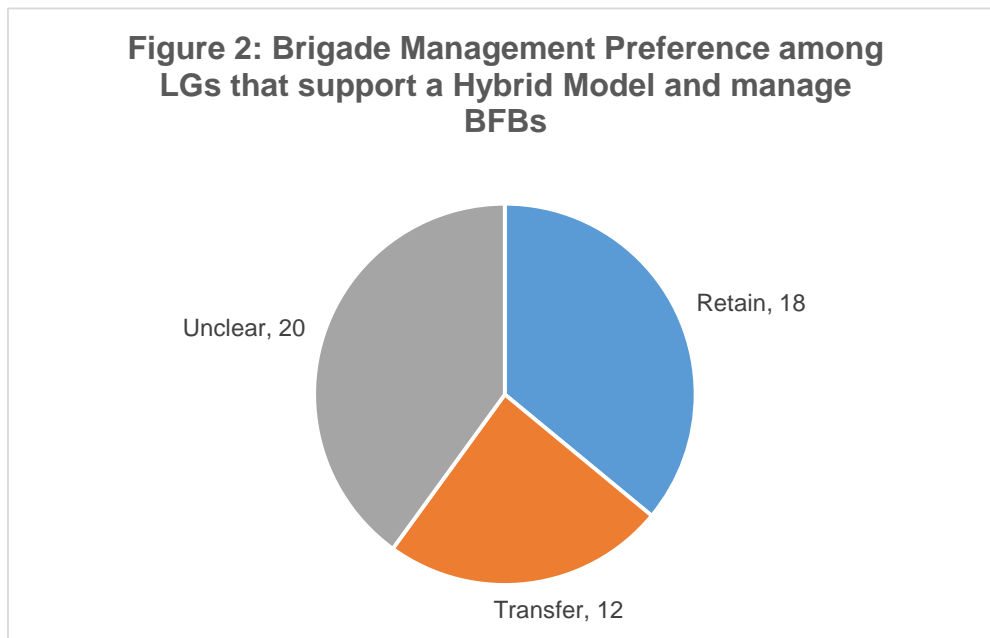
Band 1, Regional Local Government

*“The MOU with DFES has worked well within the Pilbara, with the units being provided training, management and oversight. Much better service provided by an organisation whose core business is emergency management. Training is provided to their standard, to provide consistency and enable interoperability at larger fires.”*

Band 1, regional Local Government

Among Local Governments that supported the Hybrid Model and manage BFBs, there was a mix with respect to individual preference to keep or transfer. 18 (36.0%) indicated a preference to retain management of their BFBs, 12 (24.0%) indicated a preference to transfer management of their BFBs, and 20 (40.0%) did not indicate their preference for their own BFBs (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Brigade Management Preference among LGs that support a Hybrid Model and manage BFBs**



**Option Four: Transfer**

18 Local Governments, or 20.2% of responses, supported the Transfer model. Generally these Local Governments considered it inappropriate for Local Government to manage BFBs when the State Government holds the knowledge and capability to create a tailored and cohesive Bush Fire Service.

*“Modernisation of Western Australian emergency services legislation, including alignment of the WA Bush Fires Act 1954 with the rest of Australia by removing the legislative requirement for WA Local Governments to manage Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (VBFB)...”*  
Band 3, regional Local Government

The Shire of Waroona supports transfer and has shared its position with the sector. It advocates transfer of responsibility for management of BFBs to an independent Rural Fire Service established by the State Government as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report, as well as a review of the current emergency services legislation.

*Ferguson Report Recommendation 15: The State Government to create a Rural Fire Service to enhance the capability for rural fire management and bushfire risk management at a State, regional and local level. The proposed Rural Fire Service will:*

- *be established as a separate entity from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or, alternatively, be established as a sub-department of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services;*
- *have an independent budget;*
- *be able to employ staff;*
- *have a leadership structure which, to the greatest degree possible, is regionally based and runs the entity;*
- *be led by a Chief Officer who reports to the responsible Minister on policy and administrative matters; and to the Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Services during operational and emergency response;*
- *have responsibilities and powers relating to bushfire prevention, preparedness and response; and*
- *operate collaboratively with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, Local Government and volunteer Bush Fire Brigades.*

*In creating the Rural Fire Service, the State Government to consider whether back office and corporate support services could be effectively provided by an existing Department, such as the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or the Department of Parks and Wildlife.*



*The State Government to review the creation of the Rural Fire Service two years after its establishment, to assess whether its structure and operations are achieving the intended outcome.*

#### Option Five - Other

Six Local Governments, (6.7% of responses), indicated that in the absence of a clear operational model for the future management of BFBs by the State Government, with respect to structure, funding and resources, they found it difficult to support any proposed position or model.

*"It is difficult to comment with the info available as there is no model to view or comment on apart from the other fire services intrastate (sic) being mentioned."*

Band 4, regional Local Government

Four of these submissions stated that they would prefer to continue to manage BFBs until such time as an alternative State-led model for the management of BFBs was developed in consultation with the sector.

## 2.4 Resources

There was strong support for the preparation of additional guidelines and resources to support Local Governments in managing BFBs, and provide for consistent and coordinated management of the emergency services volunteering sector.

*"...any guidelines should not be for the exclusive use of LGs, but rather, there should be a "standard" developed that acknowledges the diversity of our Bush Fire Brigades across the state, that any entity that is responsibility for the management of BFBs should have access to, and more importantly, be expected to utilise."*

Band 2, regional Local Government

*"With climate change fires are only going to get more frequent and harder to manage over the coming years. Insurance etc are going to rise due to the environment we are moving into putting further pressure on the ESL and the volunteers, we have seen this on the East Coast with the fires and flood. With more responsibility on Local Governments this will also require further resources e.g. staff to manage the increasing workloads that the changes will bring."*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*"From a Local Government perspective the increase in obligation through legislation and acquittal processes is impacting capacity of staff as well as increasing the risk profile of the organisation and officers within it. Additional support and guidance through the existing and new legislation is required, as well as an appreciation of the additional level of accountability that is placed on the Shire. In regional Shires, staff tend to work across a number of areas within the organisation and an increase in requirements in one area can have an impact across many work areas."*

Band 2, regional Local Government

Numerous responses spoke positively of the CESM program and the benefit it has brought to Local Governments in discharging their emergency management responsibilities, particularly with respect to training and managing BFBs. A number of Local Governments with a CESM were strong advocates for all Local Governments having the opportunity to participate in the CESM Program, and some stated that CESMs should be wholly funded through the ESL.

*"Council supports the proposed Advocacy Position to a large degree, with the inclusion of providing CESMs to those Shires that require them, perhaps in conjunction with neighbouring Shires."*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“We do not have a CESM and struggle to provide the support necessary to our BFBs, particularly in light of the new WHS legislation.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“Local volunteers were mostly supportive of [the Shire’s position] as they believe they would see little change on ground. A CESM would still be their first point of contact.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“A small number of local governments have been successful in their bid for a CESM (generally 50/50 funding split between DFES and the local government), however, this opportunity is not available for all local governments due to the resourcing constraints of DFES. It is therefore noted, and understandable, that those local governments who have a CESM are more likely to be comfortable for the responsibility remaining with the local government. The employment of a CESM reduces risk in many areas, including the WHS risks and volunteer burnout. It therefore follows, that the level of risk borne by each local government is variable, and a direct factor of a State Government resourcing decision.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

A significant number of responses highlighted the need for additional funding through the ESL and LGGS, and the need for formal reviews of these funding streams, further to the Economic Regulation Authority’s 2017 Review into the ESL.

*“The Shire still believes that the ESL funding process should not be managed by DFES. A change in management of this funding i.e. through Treasury, would be more transparent. Increases in responsibilities for LG through legislation is not being acknowledged through funding streams.”*

Band 2, regional Local Government

*“The current Emergency Services Levy Local Government Grant Scheme limits what Local Government can allocate the funds to. BFBs have been frustrated in some circumstances that the funding doesn’t fully cover all areas of bushfire management activities and has asked for a more flexible model.”*

Band 2, regional Local Government

In July 2022, WALGA State Council endorsed positions on the ESL and LGGS that address many of these concerns, including advocating for the implementation of the recommendations of the 2017 ERA review of the ESL, and an independent review of the LGGS. All of WALGA’s Emergency Management Advocacy Positions can be found in Appendix 5.

## **2.5 Standards for Training and Equipment**

The proposed position provided for the development of *“Mandatory and minimum training requirements for BFB volunteers supported by a universally accessible training program managed by the DFES”*.

Submissions provided feedback that training standards should:

- be ‘fit for purpose’, recognising the difference between a Brigade using DFES appliances and a farmer response unit, as well as different natural landscapes and conditions;
- not be so onerous as to discourage volunteer retention and attraction;
- not create any additional burden for Bushfire Control Officers (BFCOs) in managing BFBs during operational response; and
- be readily accessible and delivered locally.

A small number of Local Governments did not support mandatory minimum training standards as they were concerned that it would be an additional burden on BFCOs and discourage volunteering. Some feedback noted that any training should acknowledge the local needs and skills in different

areas and Brigades. Others supported mandatory training as it would provide them with confidence in the capability of BFB volunteers from their own and other Local Government managed BFBs.

Additionally, commentary around recognition of competency and prior learning and experience for volunteers was resoundingly supportive.

## 2.6 Working Group to Guide Process

Many submissions recommended that the Working Group tasked with the governance of ongoing consultation on this issue should be expanded to include other key stakeholders that would be impacted by any changes to management arrangements for BFBs. Suggestions included BFB volunteers, Local Government, the Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades, and Regional/District Operational Area Committees (RAOCs/DOACs).

*“The [City] believes any “Working Group” established “to develop a process and timeline for the transfer of responsibility of Bush Fire Brigades” must include volunteer representation.”*

Band 1, regional Local Government

*“It was felt strongly that if there is to be discussions about the future of Bush Fire Brigades, that input should be expanded from Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and WALGA, and that Brigade input should also be included. This would be best serviced via the Regional Operation Advisory Committee.”*

Band 2, regional Local Government

## 2.7 State Government Management of BFBs

The proposed position advocated for “A clear pathway for Local Governments to transfer responsibility for the management of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government when ongoing management is beyond the capacity, capability and resources of the Local Government”. A small number of respondent Local Governments did not support the use of the criteria of “capacity, capability and resources” without a clear definition or framework for its meaning and who would make the decision as to whether a Local Government had “capacity, capability and resources”.

Some Local Governments indicated a desire for further information about what a State Government operational model might look like, and raised concerns about matters including:

- that existing programs that support Local Governments to undertake their emergency management responsibilities could cease, such as the CESM program;
- that increased bureaucracy and higher standards that may come with being managed by the State Government could threaten the culture of BFBs and negatively impact local volunteering; and
- the risk of losing local autonomy, the current structure and knowledge in bushfire management, with BFBs no longer being agile or empowered in local decision-making. Transferring to the State Government could compromise local decision-making regarding Harvest Vehicle Movement Bans, Fire Break Notices, and burning times.

*“Volunteers are the backbone of regional bushfire brigades. Support for volunteers is an integral part of ensuring continued high number and engaged volunteers. Local Government brigades currently have a sense of community and an ability to be part of the decision-making process. There is often concerns raised that a transition across to a government department such as DFES that the local decision-making influence will be lost.”*

Band 2, regional Local Government

*“Any transfer to state should still have the local government as the key stakeholder in the region for discussion on mitigation and assets allocated to the region.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“It is noted that there is a requirement for key local stakeholders to remain involved with the application of Harvest bans (not being applied by someone on forecast conditions in the city), involvement with changing prohibited or restricted burning times based on local conditions and issuing permits to burn.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“The statement should recognise the need for local knowledge in bushfire management”*

Band 3, regional Local Government

*“In fire situations particularly, local knowledge, ability to quickly respond, mobilise resources and make quick decisions is critical. This is a far different modus operandi than DFES which is more concerned with protecting property rather than quickly suppressing small fires at their source to prevent them from becoming large fires. This response time and capacity cannot be compromised by a cumbersome chain of command where decisions are filtered down from DFES to local Brigades.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

16 Local Governments, or 18% of responses, supported the establishment of a Rural Fire Service or equivalent organisation independent from DFES, to manage and provide strategic oversight of BFBs. Most of these Local Governments also indicated a preference to transfer management of their BFBs to such an entity.

*“The core business of the [Shire] is not fighting fires, however it is the core business of DFES or a State Government run Fire Division.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“As noted in the proposed position paper, the recommendation from the Ferguson Report is to establish a rural fire service to address the issues of under resourced local governments and DFES’s management deficiencies. This has not been completed despite the government at the time committing to implementing the recommendations of the report. The future management of BFBs question has already been resolved and agreed – it just has to be implemented.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“It would be more expedient to have One Rural Fire Agency rather than five different fire organisations.”*

Band 1, metropolitan Local Government

## 2.8 Work Health and Safety

More than half of responding Local Governments noted their concern with the new *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS legislation). Numerous submissions noted concerns about the risks associated with managing BFBs including liability of staff, and the safety and welfare of BFB volunteers.

*“This standard [of duty of care for volunteers] has brought into focus the fact that local government is no longer the right entity to be discharging the duty of care and the duty of provision of extreme risk bush fire management services in Western Australia. Western Australia, while its health and safety legislation is now in alignment with the rest of Australia, is now at odds with the rest of Australia in terms of State Government responsibility for volunteer bush fire brigades.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“Given that Council and its officers have little control over these spontaneous volunteers, the risk levels associated with maintaining Local Government brigade status are high given that the new WHS legislation has given volunteers “employee status” even though the council management struggles to control or exclude them from a fireground.”*

Band 4, regional Local Government

*“The State Government has made crystal clear its overarching expectations regarding duty of care, including to volunteers. In doing so, however, it has raised a fundamental question about the appropriate provision of leadership and support for volunteer bush fire brigades in the extreme risk environment in which they operate.”*

Band 3, regional Local Government

Other submissions stated that Local Governments should be and are already addressing WHS requirements for their BFBs.

*“A local government’s BFB and local emergency management networks should be well trained and experienced in emergency management activities of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The new Work Health and Safety Act 2020 should not have changed anything and itself shouldn’t be used as a reason to try and transition management of BFBs to the State Government.”*

Band 3, regional Local Government

Feedback was provided in relation to:

- the need for clarity on who is responsible for the safety and welfare of BFB volunteers through the new CES Act, particularly when operational control is managed by another agency (e.g. DFES, DBCA or another Local Government);
- clarity on what is ‘reasonably practicable’ under the WHS Act;
- clear definition of ‘due diligence’ to meet WHS responsibilities;
- options to discharge or protect Local Governments from liability in relation to their WHS responsibilities for BFBs; and
- the need for consideration to be given to amendment of relevant provisions in the WHS legislation around liability for management of fire and emergency services.

Many Local Governments supported the development of standardised processes and procedures for matters including fatigue management, minimum physical capability, minimum training, equipment use, and Personal Protective Equipment/ Personal Protective Clothing (PPE/ PPC).

*“LGs are not subject matter experts in the fire space and this opens the risk of procedures being missed and impacting safety, and causing frustration for BFBs when changes are hard to initiate. Standards vary across LGs for PPE etc. There should be one source and no room for error when safety is involved and therefore this responsibility should sit with an entity trained in this space.”*

Band 3, regional Local Government

## 2.9 Volunteerism

Many submissions noted the value and importance of BFBs to local communities.

*“[The City] values its Bushfire Brigade and the contribution Brigade members make towards community safety and the community more broadly.”*

Band 1, metropolitan Local Government

In addition to this, submissions identified that succession planning for volunteers and equipment was imperative to support sustained BFB cohorts into the future.

It was also identified that ageing cohorts of volunteers and ageing equipment (including PPE/PPC) and facilities is a significant risk to the safety of BFBs, and that there is a need for a program to support the replacement and upgrading of facilities and equipment, and ongoing recruitment of volunteers.

*“The availability of volunteers will increasingly become a critical issue into the future. The future needs and challenges may be well beyond local volunteers and the Shire alone.”*

Band 3, regional Local Government

### 3. Advocacy Position

In considering the preferences expressed and issues raised in Local Governments' submissions, the following revised Advocacy Position is proposed:

#### **8.10 Management of Bush Fire Brigades**

1. *Bush Fire Brigade volunteers play a critical role in helping to protect their local communities. Local knowledge and skills are integral to bushfire management in Western Australia.*
2. *Future management and funding of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades must:*
  - a) *Recognise the changing risk environment, including work health and safety requirements, and the increasing intensity and frequency of bushfires;*
  - b) *Take account of the differing circumstances of Bush Fire Brigade units and regional variations in bush firefighting approaches; and*
  - c) *Be adequately and equitably resourced through the Emergency Services Levy.*
3. *The State Government, through the Consolidated Emergency Services Act or other mechanism must:*
  - a) *establish a clear framework to enable transfer of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government if a Local Government decides to do so;*
  - b) *Consult on the process, timeline, and implications for transfer of responsibility for Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with 3(a) through the establishment of a working group comprising representatives of Local Government, Bush Fire Brigades, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES);*
  - c) *Provide for mandatory and minimum training requirements and recognition of competency and prior learning for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers, supported by a fit-for-purpose and universally accessible training program, designed in consultation with Bush Fire Brigade representatives, Local Government and Local Government Insurance Services (LGIS), and managed by DFES; and*
  - d) *Develop a co-designed suite of relevant management guidelines and materials to assist in the management of Bush Fire Brigades.*
4. *The State Government to consider the most appropriate operational model for State Government management of Bush Fire Brigades, which may include the establishment of an independent Rural Fire Service, as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report.*

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Submissions

### Local Governments:

City of Albany  
Shire of Augusta Margaret River  
Shire of Beverley  
Shire of Boddington  
Shire of Boyup Brook  
Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes  
Shire of Brookton  
Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup  
Shire of Bruce Rock  
City of Bunbury  
City of Busselton  
Shire of Capel  
Shire of Carnamah  
Shire of Carnarvon  
Shire of Chapman Valley  
Shire of Chittering  
City of Cockburn  
Shire of Collie  
Shire of Corrigin  
Shire of Cranbrook  
Shire of Cuballing  
Shire of Cue  
Shire of Dalwallinu  
Shire of Dandaragan  
Shire of Dardanup  
Shire of Denmark  
Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup  
Shire of Dowerin  
Shire of Dumbleyung  
Shire of Dundas  
Shire of East Pilbara  
Shire of Esperance  
Shire of Exmouth  
Shire of Gnowangerup  
Shire of Goomalling  
City of Gosnells  
City of Greater Geraldton  
Shire of Harvey  
Shire of Jerramungup  
City of Joondalup  
City of Karratha  
Shire of Katanning  
Shire of Kellerberrin  
Shire of Kent  
Shire of Kojonup

Shire of Koorda  
Shire of Kulin  
City of Kwinana  
Shire of Lake Grace  
City of Mandurah  
Shire of Manjimup  
Shire of Mingenew  
Shire of Moora  
Shire of Morawa  
Shire of Mount Magnet  
Shire of Mount Marshall  
Shire of Mundaring  
Shire of Murray  
Shire of Narembeen  
Shire of Narrogin  
Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku  
Shire of Northam  
Shire of Northampton  
Shire of Nungarin  
Shire of Pingelly  
Shire of Plantagenet  
Town of Port Hedland  
Shire of Quairading  
Shire of Ravensthorpe  
Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale  
Shire of Shark Bay  
City of Swan  
Shire of Tammin  
Shire of Toodyay  
Shire of Trayning  
Shire of Upper Gascoyne  
Shire of Victoria Plains  
Shire of Wagin  
Shire of Wandering  
Shire of Waroona  
Shire of West Arthur  
Shire of Westonia  
Shire of Wickpin  
Shire of Williams  
Shire of Woodanilling  
Shire of Wyalkatchem  
Shire of Yalgoo  
Shire of Yilgarn  
Shire of York

### Zones: Gascoyne Country Zone

Letter received from the Association of Volunteer  
Bush Fire Brigades



## Appendix 2: WALGA engagement during consultation period

- Item for discussion on all WALGA Zone meeting Agendas ahead of July State Council meeting
- Item for Noting for July 2022 State Council meeting
- Emergency Management Policy Team Attendance at the following zone meetings:
  - South Metropolitan Zone
  - Great Eastern Country Zone
  - North Metropolitan Zone
- WALGA President Karen Chappel
  - Interview with Andrew Collins ABC Regional Radio (65k listeners)
  - Interview with Belinda Varischetti ABC Country Hour (listeners unknown)
  - Statement on GWN TV News (45k viewers)
  - Comments in The Countryman Newspaper (6k circulation)
    - Also ran in Manjimup-Bridgetown Times and MidWest Times Northern Guardian
  - Comments in Farm Weekly Newspaper (15k circulation)
- WALGA President email via all Local Government Elected members on Friday, 1 July 2022 reinforcing the intent of the discussion paper and encouraging responses.
- WALGA CEO email via Local Government CEOs to Local Governments yet to respond sent Wednesday, 20 July.
- Letter to the Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades WA on Friday, 8 July 2022 (in response to letter from Association of 22 June).

## **Appendix 3: Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position (May 2022)**

[https://walga.asn.au/getattachment/Documents/2022\\_WALGA\\_Proposed\\_Advocacy\\_Position\\_BFBs.pdf?lang=en-AU](https://walga.asn.au/getattachment/Documents/2022_WALGA_Proposed_Advocacy_Position_BFBs.pdf?lang=en-AU)

## Appendix 4: WALGA Emergency Management Advocacy Positions

These can be viewed on the WALGA website <https://walga.asn.au/policy-advocacy/our-policy-areas/emergency-management> or below.

### 8 Emergency Management

Local Governments in Western Australia play a significant role in emergency management. Both Commonwealth and State Government policy identify Local Government as a key player in community disaster resilience, preparedness and response. Local Governments however face a number of challenges in addressing their emergency management responsibilities, and these challenges differ greatly across the State.

#### 8.1 Emergency Management Principles

1. The State Government bears fundamental responsibility for emergency management and has the role of providing strategic guidance, support and services for emergency management activities in Western Australia.
2. The State Government should provide financial and resourcing support as necessary to enable Local Governments to adequately deliver their extensive emergency management roles and responsibilities under the State Emergency Management Framework.
3. The Local Government Sector should be engaged as a partner in policy and legislative reviews that impact Local Government emergency management roles and responsibilities.

#### 8.2 State Emergency Management Framework

Local Governments are supported to undertake their emergency management responsibilities by a simple and streamlined State Emergency Management Framework with the primary objectives of:

1. Protecting people, the economy, and the natural environment from disasters;
2. Supporting communities in preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies;
3. Clearly outlining roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for Local Government and other emergency management stakeholders;
4. Scalability and adaptability that supports Local Governments of varied capacity and capability; and
5. Supporting agency interoperability through common systems and approaches to key activities including data management, communications, and hazard management.

#### 8.3 Sustainable Grant Funding Model for Emergency Management

Local Government should be empowered to discharge its emergency management responsibilities through sustainable grant funding models that support a shared responsibility and all hazards approach to prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from natural disasters. A sustainable grant funding model for Local Government emergency management:

1. empowers Local Governments to undertake proactive approaches to preparedness, prevention, response and recovery;
2. supports the resilience of local communities through capacity-building activities and programs;
3. is responsive to the variations in Local Government resourcing and context;
4. develops the skills, capacity and capability of the emergency management workforce; and
5. is consistent, flexible, timely, accessible, scalable, strategic and the guidance provided is comprehensive.

#### 8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Act

1. The Association advocates for the development of a Consolidated Emergency Services Act to provide a comprehensive and contemporary legislative framework to support the effective delivery of emergency services in Western Australia. The Legislation should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all emergency management stakeholders including Local Government.
2. The Local Government sector seeks ongoing engagement in the scoping and co-design of the Act and associated Regulations and supporting materials such as Guidelines and fact sheets.

3. The Association advocates for DFES to undertake a full costing analysis of the new Act and to provide to Local Government details of the cost implications prior to the release of any Exposure Draft Bill.
4. Any new or increased responsibilities placed on Local Government by the Consolidated Emergency Services Act must be accompanied by funding and resource support to enable Local Governments to adequately discharge those responsibilities.
5. The Association recognises that in addition to the Consolidated Emergency Services Act, the Regulations and other supporting materials that are developed to support it provide a key resource for Local Governments in understanding and discharging their legislative obligations.

### **8.5 Resource Sharing**

Local Governments and the Association support resource sharing across the Local Government Sector for the purpose of emergency management, to support Local Governments to undertake effective and timely response and recovery to emergencies as well as conduct business as usual. The Association will endeavour to facilitate support to the sector in undertaking resource sharing arrangements.

### **8.6 Lessons Learnt Management**

The Association advocates for the implementation of a transparent and contemporary assurance framework for emergency management lessons management overseen by the State Emergency Management Committee. Findings from inquiries and reviews, and progress on implementation of recommendations, should be publicly reported regularly and consistently.

### **8.7 Emergency Services Levy**

1. Local Government request the implementation of the recommendations from the 2017 Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) Review of the Emergency Services Levy, which supported increased transparency and accountability in the administration and distribution of the ESL through:
  - a) Expansion of the ESL to fund Local Government emergency management activities across prevention, preparedness and response;
  - b) Administration of the ESL by an independent organisation that is funded through consolidated revenue, with regular independent reviews of expenditure and assessment of the effectiveness of ESL funding expenditure to support prevention, preparedness and response activities;
  - c) Public disclosure of the allocation and expenditure of the ESL;
  - d) Public disclosure by the State Government on the progress of implementation of each of the ERA Review recommendations; and
  - e) A review of the role, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program.
2. Local Government advocates that the ESL should be collected by the State Government, but failing that, the administration fee should recompense Local Governments for the complete cost of administering the ESL.

### **8.8 Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS)**

Local Government supports:

1. A full, independent review of the LGGS to investigate and analyse how ESL funds are allocated to Local Government via the LGGS;
2. A redesign of the LGGS to remove the ineligible and eligible list and create a sustainable, modern, equitable grants program that funds Local Government emergency management activities across prevention, preparedness and response;
3. An audit of existing buildings, facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment for both Local Government Volunteer Bushfire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Services (SES) to inform the preparation of a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan and to guide future funding requests; and
4. in the interim, an immediately increase in the quantum of State Government funding to enable the provision of funding of operating and capital grant applications in full, to provide all resources necessary for the safe and efficient operation of Local Government Bushfire Brigades, in accordance with obligations of the Work Health and Safety 2020 legislation.

### **8.9 Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program**

That the Association advocates for an expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program, as follows:

1. All Local Governments should have the option of participating in the CESM Program.
2. The full cost of the CESM Program should be funded through the Emergency Services Levy.

## 6. MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION

### 6.1 Local Government Homelessness Knowledge Hub (05-086-03-0004 VB)

By Vikki Barlow, Senior Policy Advisor Community

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That the completion of the Local Government Homelessness Knowledge Hub be noted.**

#### Executive Summary

- Shelter WA was awarded Lotterywest funding to develop an Online Homelessness Knowledge Hub to provide resources and tools to assist Local Government in responding to homelessness.
- WALGA supported the development of the Hub through a Memorandum of Understanding with Shelter WA and Local Government Professionals WA.
- The Knowledge Hub, which includes a website and training for Local Government, was launched on Friday, 5 August as part of Homelessness Week 2022.

#### Attachment

- [Homelessness Knowledge Hub Website](#)

#### Policy Implications

WALGA's [Advocacy Position](#) 3.11 Homelessness states:

*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.*

#### Background

Shelter WA is the peak body for social and affordable housing and ending homelessness in WA. In 2021 Shelter WA was awarded a Strengthening and Adapting Organisations Grant from Lotterywest to undertake the development of a Homelessness Knowledge Hub for Local Government in partnership with WALGA and Local Government Professionals WA.

WALGA provided support for the project through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Shelter WA and Local Government Professionals WA.

#### Comment

Under the MOU WALGA:

- participated in the project reference group comprised of Local Government representatives from across WA, peak bodies, and the Department of Communities;
- provided Local Government expertise and helped facilitate access to information about Local Government homelessness responses; and
- assisted in organising and promoting sector engagement and input.

The centerpiece of the Project is an online homelessness resource (a Local Government Homelessness Knowledge Hub) for Local Governments to share information and to inform evidence-based homelessness responses.

The Hub includes information on the drivers of homelessness, case studies, guiding documents, examples of best practice in strategic, policy and operational responses from a range of Local Governments to inform local approaches.

As part of the project, Shelter WA has also developed training for the Local Government sector. The training is designed to benefit Local Government front line staff who engage people experiencing homelessness such as Rangers, Community Development Officers, Library and Leisure Centre staff, and relevant policy, planning and managerial staff.

The objectives of the training are for Local Government staff to have a better understanding of:

- Information about homelessness including definition and terms;
- Statistics and trends;
- The systemic and individual drivers of homelessness;
- The role and function of local, State and Federal Government in ending homelessness in WA;
- Examples of Local Government homelessness policies, protocols and responses;
- The Housing First Model and no wrong door approach;
- Trauma, de-escalation and self-care.

A series of information sessions on the Hub and training are being delivered for Local Government.

The Hub was launched on Friday, 5 August as part of Homelessness Week 2022.

## 6.2 State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement 2023/24 (05-001-03-0001 ID)

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager, Infrastructure

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the update on negotiations toward a new State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement be noted.**

### Executive Summary

- WALGA has commenced discussions with Main Roads WA concerning the framework and content of an agreement with the State Government that would apply a share of revenue hypothecated from motor vehicle licence fees to Local Government roads. The proposed agreement would supersede the current five-year agreement that expires in June 2023.
- Local Governments are seeking incremental improvement to the existing arrangements and increased funding.
- Both Main Roads WA and WALGA support retaining the broad structure of the current agreement.
- The State Government is seeking to maximise wider benefits from investment in roads managed by Local Governments through stronger commitments to increased employment of Aboriginal people and businesses in road construction, more extensive use of recycled materials in road construction and an increased emphasis on safety outcomes.
- Subject to progress, State Council may need to consider a proposed agreement prior to the December meeting.

### Attachment

- [State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement 2018/19 to 2022/23](#)

### Background

The current five-year State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement (SRFTLGA) expires in June 2023. Since 2018/19 the SRFTLGA has provided \$1,022 million to maintain, renew and improve roads managed by Local Governments. This is \$56 million (5.8%) higher than forecast when the current Agreement was signed in 2018, reflecting higher than expected numbers of vehicles registered in Western Australia.

The key programs funded through the SRFTLGA are:

1. Road Project Grants (46.6% of total funds)

For renewal and upgrade of high traffic volume and regionally significant roads with projects assessed and prioritised by each of the ten Regional Road Groups (RRGs) using their documented methodology.

2. Direct Grants (13.2% of total funds)

For maintenance of any roads. Distribution between Local Governments is based on the Road Asset Preservation Model Values determined by the Local Government Grants Commission.

3. State Initiatives on Local Roads (14.0% of total funds)

Typically large and/or complex road and bridge works on urban or rural roads. These State Government initiated projects are generally delivered by Main Roads WA on behalf of Local Governments and may involve Federal Government funding.



4. Traffic Management, Signs & Pavement Marking (13.0% of funds)

Provision and maintenance of signs, pavement markings, installation and operating cost of traffic control signals.

5. State BlackSpot Program (5.5% of funds)

For improving the safety performance of roads with a proven crash history or high-risk locations with the likelihood of crashes occurring.

6. Bridge Works and Inspections (5.0% of funds)

For replacement and refurbishment of bridges, including matching funding for projects supported by the Commonwealth Bridges Renewal Program and the Bridges Component of Financial Assistance Grants allocation to Western Australia.

In early 2022 the Minister for Transport provided Main Roads WA approval to enter into discussions with WALGA concerning a new Agreement. Local Government delegates to the State Road Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee, appointed by WALGA State Council, are leading engagement with Government regarding the funding and commitments within a new Agreement.

### Comment

WALGA is seeking that the new Agreement:

1. Preserve or increase the investment decision-making opportunities for Local Governments directly and through the Regional Road Groups

The State Government is committed to ensure that the key inter- and intra-regional roads meet the wider community and industry needs. Discussions concerning whether there is a need to influence the balance of investment between renewal of existing roads and improvement of the network to meet safety and capacity requirements are continuing.

2. Maintain or increase funding available for investment in local roads and paths

The Local Government share of motor vehicle licensing revenue was cut from 27% to 20% in 2015/16 as part of temporary budget repair measures. Significant increases in road works costs, increased road wear from heavy vehicles coupled with an existing gap between actual maintenance / renewal investment and that required to maintain the existing asset condition means that funding for Local Government roads from vehicle licence fees needs to increase over the coming five years. The capacity of industry to deliver these essential works will be considered when proposing how this increased investment will be delivered.

3. Maximise opportunities to improve the safety of the road transport system for all users.

Local Government roads carry 44% of total traffic but 58% of all road fatalities and serious injuries occur on roads managed by Local Governments. The personal tragedy from serious crashes coupled with the \$2.4 billion per year burden on the community through health, emergency response and broader economic costs justifies investment to improve the system. Opportunities being considered include mechanisms to encourage low-cost safety improvement treatments to be included in road rehabilitation and improvement projects, and mass action treatments that can be applied to reduce the frequency and severity of the most common crash types.

Through Main Roads WA, the State Government has advised that it is seeking increased focus and stronger commitments to:

1. Aboriginal employment and procurement from Aboriginal controlled businesses;
2. Use of recycled materials in road construction; and

### 3. Road safety.

The State Government is seeking a commitment from Local Governments that, within an agreed time frame, systems and processes for encouraging, monitoring and reporting be implemented for Aboriginal employment, use of recycled materials and Safe System treatments in Direct Grant and Road Project Grant funded works.

Discussions with the State Government will need to address Local Governments' capacity to deliver and acquit road grant funds. Just \$4.1 million was carried forward from unspent funds into 2018/19, the first year of the current Agreement. This grew to \$45.7 million that was carried forward into 2021/22, despite focussed efforts of RRGs to work with Local Governments and only allocate funds where projects could be delivered. Final acquittal results for 2021/22 were not known at time of writing, but it is estimated that the amount requested to carry forward into 2022/23 will be higher than in 2021/22. Given constraints on staff and contractor availability it will likely remain difficult to deliver these projects, in addition to the new projects awarded funding in 2022/23.

To inform the development of a new Agreement, WALGA has consulted with RRG Chairs, a Local Government Reference Group comprising Officer representation from each RRG, the RRG Secretariates and SAC delegates. The parties have indicated that the structure of the current Agreement is satisfactory and there is no need for substantial changes. Most matters of concern identified can be improved through changes to the Procedures.

WALGA and Main Roads WA are continuing to work toward agreed wording of a new agreement ahead of meetings with the Director General and Minister for Transport concerning funding.

## 6.3 Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave Entitlements Update (05-034-01-0001 DH)

By Davina Hunter, Employee Relations Service Manager

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the update on Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave Entitlements be noted.**

### Executive Summary

- Local Governments operating in the Federal and State industrial relations (IR) systems are currently required to provide employees with a minimum of five days of unpaid family and domestic violence leave (FDVL).
- The Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission (FWC) undertook a review of FDVL entitlements and sought submissions on whether an entitlement to 10 days of paid FDVL should be introduced in modern awards, including the Federal Local Government Industry Award 2020 (Federal Award).
- WALGA made a submission to the FWC on behalf of WA Local Governments and other Local Government Associations supporting the introduction of five days of paid FDVL as a minimum entitlement in the Federal Award.
- In May 2022 the FWC published its provisional view that 10 days of paid FDVL should be included in modern awards.
- In July 2022 the Federal Government introduced a bill to provide all employees in the Federal IR system with 10 days of paid FDVL.
- If this bill is successfully passed, there will be no need for the FWC to amend any modern awards, including the Federal Award, to include an entitlement to paid FDVL as it will become a minimum legislative entitlement in the National Employment Standards (NES) in the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) (FW Act).
- The bill proposes to extend the entitlement of paid FDVL to non-national system employees, meaning that if the bill is successfully passed, Local Governments operating in the State IR system would also be required to provide employees with a minimum of 10 days of paid FDVL.

### Attachment

- [Full Minutes of the WALGA State Council Meeting on 1 December 2021](#) – see pages 8 to 26
- [Fair Work Amendment \(Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave\) Bill 2022 \(Cth\)](#)

### Background

#### Federal IR system

During the four yearly review of modern awards, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) made a claim for 10 days' paid FDVL. The Full Bench issued a decision on 26 March 2018 rejecting the ACTU claim for 10 days of paid FDVL but the majority of the Full Bench expressed the preliminary view that all employees should have access to unpaid FDVL and that employees should be able to access personal/carer's leave for the purposes of taking FDVL.

On 13 December 2018, the *Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act 2018* amended the FW Act to provide all employees with a new entitlement to five days' unpaid FDVL as a NES entitlement.

In April 2021 the FWC commenced a review of the FDVL term in modern awards to consider:

- whether employees should be able to access paid personal/carer's leave for the purpose of taking FDVL;
- the adequacy of the unpaid FDVL entitlement; and
- whether provisions should be made for paid FDVL.

On 3 February 2022, WALGA filed a [joint submission](#) in the FWC's FDVL Review. The joint submission was made on behalf of the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory, Local Government NSW (which later withdrew from the submission), the Municipal Association of Victoria and WALGA.

WALGA's joint submission was based on WALGA's State Council resolution 292.7/2021 and the WA results from the FDVL survey that WALGA conducted. The joint submission was made in respect of the Federal Award and advocated for five days of paid FDVL as a minimum entitlement, access to paid personal/carer's leave for the purposes of taking FDVL and that the current NES entitlement of five days of unpaid FDVL is inadequate.

On 16 May 2022, the FWC published a [Decision](#) setting out the provisional view of the Full Bench regarding the review of paid FDVL, which is that the inclusion of 10 days of paid FDVL in modern awards is necessary to achieve the modern awards objective.

On 28 June 2022 the Federal Government confirmed that it sought to introduce legislation to provide for paid FDVL. In response, the FWC has put the progress of the modern award amendments on hold, until it is clear if and when a legislative entitlement to paid FDVL will be introduced.

On 28 July 2022, the Federal Government introduced the [Fair Work Amendment \(Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave\) Bill 2022](#). The Bill provides employees in the Federal IR system with 10 days of paid FDVL and proposes to extend this entitlement to employees in the State IR system.

#### State IR system

On 20 June 2022 the *Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993 (WA)* (MCE Act) was amended to include an entitlement to five days of unpaid FDVL, which applies as a minimum entitlement for employees in the State IR system. The Bill introduced by the Federal Government proposes to extend the 10 days of paid FDVL to employees in the State IR system. If the Bill is successfully passed as proposed, employees in the State IR system will also be entitled to 10 days of paid FDVL. It is unclear whether the State Government intends to amend the MCE Act to also provide for a paid FDVL entitlement.

## 6.4 Proposed State Industrial Relations Transition (05-034-01-0001 DH)

By Davina Hunter, Employee Relations Service Manager

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the update on the proposed State industrial relations (IR) transition be noted.**

### Executive Summary

- Although the State IR legislation was Proclaimed on 20 June 2022, it is still unclear whether any declaration that all Local Governments are not “national system employers” for the purpose of the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) (FW Act) will be endorsed by the Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.
- Therefore the proposed transition and the timeframe for commencement of any transition is also still unclear.
- WALGA continues to advocate on behalf of Local Governments as per item 2.6.1 of WALGA’s Advocacy Positions Manual.

### Attachments

- [WALGA Fact Sheet – Steps for Transition to Occur](#)
- [Letter from WALGA to the Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations dated 3 June 2022](#)
- [Letter in response from the Attorney General’s Department of the Australian Government to WALGA dated 7 July 2022](#)
- [Letter from WALGA to the Hon. Bill Johnston MLA, Minister for Industrial Relations dated 5 July 2022](#)
- [Letter in response from the Hon. Bill Johnston MLA to WALGA dated 9 August 2022](#)

### Policy Implications

WALGA’s [Advocacy Position](#) 2.6.1 Industrial Award Coverage states:

*That WALGA:*

1. *Advocate for modernization of the WA industrial relations framework with a view to achieve consistency with the predominant Federal industrial relations system.*
2. *Further, WALGA opposes the proposed transfer of all Local Governments to the State Industrial Relations System.*
3. *If Local Government is to be transferred to the State Industrial Relations system, the State system must be modernised first to ensure it aligns with the Federal system.*
4. *If the State Government reintroduces legislation to require all Local Governments to operate within the State Industrial Relations System, continue to advocate for the State Government to:*
  - a. *Amend the Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA) to include additional provisions to modernise the State IR system; and*
  - b. *Provide adequate funding and resourcing to ensure Local Governments are equipped with the appropriate tools and training to enable a smooth transition.*

### Background

Historically WA Local Governments have been regulated by the Federal IR system. Since the commencement of the FW Act in 2009, 79% of WA Local Governments apply the FW Act and the federal Local Government Industry Award 2020 and have enterprise agreements registered by the Fair Work Commission. A small portion of Local Governments apply the State IR legislation resulting in a dual IR system for WA Local Governments.

The *Industrial Relations Act 1979* (WA) was amended on 20 June 2022 to enable a declaration to be endorsed by the Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations that all Local Governments are not ‘national system employers’ for the purpose of the FW Act. The effect of this legislation is to transition Local Governments to the State IR system.

The *Industrial Relations (General) Regulations 1997* (WA) have also been amended to individually name all WA Local Governments and Regional Councils (with the exception of the Shire of Christmas Island and the Shire of Cocos Keeling).

At this stage it is unclear whether any declaration will be endorsed by the Federal Minister, and therefore the timeframe for commencement of any transition is unclear.

A summary of the outstanding steps that are required to be completed before Local Governments are transitioned to the State IR system is set out in a fact sheet prepared by WALGA Employee Relations.

In terms of recent advocacy with the Federal Government, WALGA:

- Met with the advisor to the former Federal Industrial Relations Minister in February 2022.
- Wrote to the former Federal Industrial Relations Minister in March 2022.
- Wrote to the new Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Hon. Tony Burke MP in June 2022.

On 7 July 2022, the Attorney General's Department of the Australian Government advised WALGA that it will carefully consider the matters raised in the latest correspondence to the Federal Minister if a request is received from the State Government to endorse such a declaration.

In terms of recent advocacy with the State Government, WALGA:

- Met with the Minister for Industrial Relations, the Hon. Bill Johnston MLA in May 2022.
- Wrote a follow up letter to the Minister in July 2022.

On 9 August, the State Minister wrote to WALGA to obtain further particulars of the funding request, inform WALGA of his intention to discuss the timing of the 'relevant day' with stakeholders and reconvene the Local Government Taskforce if the Federal Minister endorses the declaration.

WALGA has a meeting scheduled with the Minister's advisor and representatives from the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety in August 2022 to discuss funding for the sector to support the transition.

## **Comment**

A WALGA survey of the sector, undertaken in April/May 2022, illustrates that of the 71 Local Governments that participated in the survey:

- 77.46% do not support the transition from the Federal to the State IR system; and
- 66.20% would prefer a referral of powers so that Local Governments can all operate in the Federal IR system.

WALGA continues to advocate on behalf of members in accordance with item 2.6.1 of WALGA's Advocacy Positions Manual.

The key focus of advocacy, if the Federal Government endorses the declaration that will mandate Local Governments to operate in the State IR system, is:

- For a smooth transition, including working together with the State Government.
- Requesting funding in accordance with the estimated costing of \$15 million over two years based on a WALGA survey.
- Requesting a 6-month clear transitional timeframe before Local Governments are required to comply with the State IR system.
- For the Taskforce to be reconvened.

## 6.5 2023-24 State Budget Submission Approach (05-0001-03-0006 DM)

*By Dana Mason, Manager Economics*

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the approach for the 2023-24 State Budget Submission, which was endorsed via Flying Minute, be noted.**

### Executive Summary

- Each year, WALGA prepares a submission to the State Government outlining the sector's priorities for the upcoming budget.
- The attached presentation outlines WALGA's proposed approach and priorities for the 2023-24 submission.
- The Association's approach to the State Budget Submission was endorsed by State Council via Flying Minute.
- The final submission is provided for the State Council's endorsement at [Agenda item 5.1](#).

### Attachment

- [2023-24 State Budget Submission – Proposed Approach](#)

## 7. ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

### 7.1 Policy Team Reports

#### 7.1.1 Environment and Waste Policy Team Report

*Presented by Policy Team Chair, Cr Les Price*

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That the matters considered by the Environment and Waste Policy Team be noted.**

#### Background

*The Environment and Waste Policy Team includes the following subject areas:*

- *Climate change*
- *Native vegetation and biodiversity*
- *Biosecurity*
- *Water resources*
- *Sustainability*
- *Waste management*

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Environment and Waste Policy Team at its meeting held on 6 July.

#### 1. Matters for State Council Decision

Nil

#### 2. Matters for Noting by State Council

At its meeting on 6 July, the Environment and Waste Policy Team:

- received a presentation from Ruby Pettit, Policy Officer Planning and Jade Mains, Senior Policy Advisor Environment on WALGA's Issues Paper: *Local Government Approaches to Tree Retention* (included in the July State Council Agenda);
- considered the request from the South East Metropolitan Zone regarding an Elected Member Sustainability Network. The Policy Team will provide information to the Zone identifying the existing opportunities for Elected Member engagement in this important topic;
- discussed the review of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act), the WALGA BAM Act Review Discussion Paper and the emerging issues relating to biosecurity, such as the varroa mite and its potential impact on the apiarist industry;
- received an update on WALGA's work regarding:
  - ARENA Future Fuels Fund for Electric Vehicles, including the significant response from Local Government to this potential funding opportunity;
  - Cultural Burning Practices, focusing on the South West Cultural Burning Project which provides an opportunity to showcase and provide training in cultural burning practices;
  - Transition to Electrification, identifying that following advocacy from WALGA the Cities Power Partnership will be providing a toolkit and other resources to assist Local Governments transition to electrification.



## 7.1.2 Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team Report

Presented by Policy Team Chair, Cr Russ Fishwick

### RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. **Retains Advocacy Positions:**
  - a. **2.1.1 Rating Exemptions – Rate equivalency payments**
  - b. **2.4.3 NBN Delivery to Regional WA**
  - c. **2.5.6 Leave of Absence: State or Federal Elections**
  - d. **2.5.7 Disqualification Due to Conviction**
  - e. **2.8.1 Payment of Sitting Fees to Local Government Representatives**
2. **Amends Advocacy Position 2.5.60 External Oversight, by inserting an additional item 5 as follows**
  5. ***If State Government, does not support external oversight of behaviour complaint, WALGA advocates for a new category of interest be included in the Act, that requires any Council Member who is either the complainant or the respondent to a behaviour complaint, be required to disclose the interest and be required to leave the meeting and therefore be prohibited from participation in debate or voting on the matter.***
3. **Requests the Secretariat write to the Minister for Local Government reinforcing WALGA’s Advocacy Position 2.5.60 ‘External Oversight’ and the sector’s concerns with the potential for undue influence on fair and reasonable consideration of a behaviour complaint by members who are party to the complaint, advising the Minister of the additional item 5 as WALGA’s alternative advocacy.**

### Background

The Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team includes the following subject areas:

- Employee relations
- Governance
- Strategy and Association Governance
- Training
- Regional Capacity Building / Local Government Reform

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the Governance and Organisational Services (GOS) Policy Team at its meeting held on 4 July.

### 1. Matters for State Council Decision

The GOS Policy Team reviewed a number of WALGA Advocacy Positions and provides recommendations for State Council consideration.

Advocacy Positions may be reviewed in the WALGA [Advocacy Position Manual](#).

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#### 1.1 Advocacy Position 2.1.1 Rating Exemptions – Rate equivalency payments

GOS Policy Team comment: The Rating Exemptions Review is being pursued by WALGA, along with the specifics of Advocacy Position 2.1.1, through the Local Government Reform (Act Review) consultations with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and the Minister.

**The GOS Policy Team recommends State Council retain Advocacy Position 2.1.1 Rating Exemptions – Rate equivalency payments.**

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### **Advocacy Position 2.4.3 NBN Delivery to Regional WA**

GOS Policy Team comment: Stable, resilient and fast broadband solutions remains an issue for regional and remote Western Australia.

**The GOS Policy Team recommends State Council retain Advocacy Position 2.4.3 NBN Delivery to Regional WA.**

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### **1.2 Advocacy Position 2.5.6 Leave of Absence: State or Federal Elections**

GOS Policy Team comment: Advocacy Position 2.5.6 remains contemporary and will be pursued through the Local Government Reform (Act Review) consultations with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and the Minister.

**The GOS Policy Team recommends State Council retain Advocacy Position 2.5.6 Leave of Absence: State or Federal Elections.**

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### **1.3 Advocacy Position 2.5.7 Disqualification Due to Conviction**

GOS Policy Team comment: Advocacy Position 2.5.7 remains contemporary and will be pursued through the Local Government Reform (Act Review) consultations with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and the Minister.

**The GOS Policy Team recommends State Council retain Position 2.5.7 Disqualification Due to Conviction.**

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### **1.4 Advocacy Position 2.8.1 Payment of Sitting Fees to Local Government Representatives**

GOS Policy Team comment: This Advocacy Position remains a contemporary matter and will be pursued by WALGA through the Local Government Reform (Act Review) consultations with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and the Minister.

**The GOS Policy Team recommends State Council retain Advocacy Position 2.8.1 Payment of Sitting Fees to Local Government Representatives.**

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### **1.5 Advocacy Position 2.5.60 External Oversight**

GOS Policy Team comment: Considered a request from the City of Wanneroo, for WALGA to obtain legal advice as to the validity of [Model Code of Conduct] Division 3 provisions. Secretariate advice included:

*It is not considered necessary for legal advice to be obtained as the flaw of the behaviour complaints system and potential for undue influence over fair and reasonable consideration of complaints is self evident.*

**The GOS Policy Team recommends State Council amend Advocacy Position 2.5.50 External Oversight, to include further advocacy on this matter as per the recommendation.**

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## **2. Matters for Noting by State Council**

Nil

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### 7.1.3 Infrastructure Policy Team Report

*Presented by Policy Team Chair, President Cr Chris Pavlovich*

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That State Council:**

1. amend Advocacy Position 5.3.2 Western Australian Bicycle Network by inserting:

*That WALGA advocate for:*

1. *At least 33% increase in funding for the Perth Bicycle Network and Regional Bicycle Network programs; and*
  2. *That PBN and RBN grants be offered to Local Governments on the basis of \$2 from the State and \$1 from Local Government, in line with road funding arrangements.*
2. amend Advocacy Position 5.2.5 The Role of Local Government in the Future of Warden Controlled Children's Crossings by inserting:

*That WALGA:*

1. *Through its representation on the Children's Crossings and Road Safety Committee of the WA Police Force:*
    - a) *Oppose any recommendation by the Children's Crossings and Road Safety Committee to the Minister of Police that the moratorium on removing Children's Crossings be lifted.*
    - b) *Support finding alternative methods to alleviating the lack of Traffic Wardens which may, amongst other measures, include advocating:*
      - i. *That income from serving as a Traffic Warden is exempt from income tax, and the income test for pension eligibility, to make the job more attractive.*
      - ii. *For an increase in the pay of Traffic Wardens.*
      - iii. *Removing the requirement to live within a specified distance of the crossing.*
      - iv. *For providing funding to support the training of volunteer Traffic Wardens.*
    - c) *Support the conversion of Children's Crossings on roads 60 km/h and above to fixed, mid-block, pedestrian priority, signalised crossings, reducing the need for Traffic Wardens.*
  2. *Advocate for funding to create safe active travel routes within a 1500m radius of schools.*
3. **note the matters considered by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting on 6 July 2022.**

#### Background

*The Infrastructure Policy Team includes the following subject areas:*

- *Roads and paths*
- *Road safety*
- *Transport*
- *Freight*
- *Utilities (including telecommunications and underground power)*

This Report provides an update on matters considered since the last State Council meeting by the Infrastructure Policy Team at its meeting held on 6 July 2022.

## 1. Matters for State Council Decision

The Infrastructure Policy Team reviewed WALGA Advocacy Positions as per below and provides recommendations for State Council consideration.

Advocacy Positions may be viewed in the WALGA [Advocacy Positions Manual](#).

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### 1.1 Advocacy Position 5.3.2 Western Australian Bicycle Network

**Current Position Statement**                      The Local Government sector supports a bicycle network which connects key activity centres identified in Directions 2031, expansion of the Principal Shared Path network to train/bus stations, shops and schools, funding provided to Local Governments for the maintenance of paths, increased funding each financial year to deliver PSP projects and provide grants to Local Governments, a quantified economic assessment of the benefits from investment and a set out funding program over time to reflect cost inflation and growth in demand.

**State Council Resolutions**                      March 2022 – 325.2/2022  
July 2012 – 89.4/2012

Infrastructure Polity Team comment: The Long-Term Cycling Network Plan and WA Bicycle Network Plan 2014-2031 were supported by State Council and all but one metropolitan Local Government.

The Department of Transport administers the Perth Bicycle Network and Regional Bicycle Network Grants Programs which offer grants of up to 50% of the total project cost, for the planning, design and implementation of bicycle network infrastructure and programs. Funding (\$2.34m in 2022/23) for these programs is through the State Initiatives component of the State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement (20% of vehicle licence fees).

State Government funding for road renewal and improvement projects under the State Road Funds to Local Government agreement is provided on the basis of \$2 from the State and \$1 from the Local Government.

The Infrastructure Policy team believes that aligning the funding arrangements will achieve greater equity in support for different transport modes.

Unless there is an increase in funding, the proposed change in co-funding arrangements will result in less projects being delivered.

**The Infrastructure Policy Team recommends State Council amend Advocacy Position 5.3.2.**

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### 1.2 Advocacy Position 5.2.5 The Role of Local Government in the Future of Warden Controlled Children’s Crossings

**Current Position Statement**                      The Local Government sector:

1. opposes the concept of transferring oversight of warden controlled children’s crossing away from the WA Police Service;
2. recommends the core responsibility for this important road and traffic safety issue should be allocated to one State Government agency, preferably the WA Police Service; and
3. supports the continued assistance through the areas for which it has responsibility and expertise.

Infrastructure Policy Team comment: The existing Advocacy Position in relation to Children's Crossings deals with the responsibilities for managing crossings but does not provide clarity on the Local Government sector's position in relation to the politically sensitive removal of crossings.

The Infrastructure Policy Team acknowledge the existing shortage of Traffic Wardens for children's crossing and highlight the negative impact of removing crossings on the proportion of children walking or riding to school and the risk that communities will demand Local Governments fill the gaps created by the removal of staffed crossings.

**The Infrastructure Policy Team recommends State Council amend Advocacy Position 5.2.5.**

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## **2. Matters for Noting by State Council**

At the meeting on 6 July, the Infrastructure Policy Team considered matters related to:

- Safe use of eRideables;
- Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements;
- WA Rail Access Code;
- Draft State Active Mobility Strategy.

## 7.1.4 People and Place Policy Team Report

*Presented by Policy Team Chair, President Cr Tony Dean*

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the matters considered by the People and Place Policy Team be noted.**

#### Background

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

- *Community*
- *Emergency Management*
- *Planning and Building*

This Report provides an update on matters considered, since the last State Council meeting, by the People and Place Policy Team at its meeting held on 30 June.

#### 1. Matters for State Council Decision

A draft advocacy position on the management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades will be considered at the September State Council meeting.

Advocacy Positions may be viewed in the WALGA [Advocacy Positions Manual](#).

#### 2. Matters for Noting by State Council

At the meeting on 30 June, the Policy Team:

- received a presentation on WALGA's Issues Paper: *Local Government Approaches to Tree Retention*;
- noted relevant matters in the July 2022 State Council Agenda;
- noted the timing and scope of WALGA's 2022-23 State Budget Submission; and
- received an update on the *ESD Forum Webinar – National Construction Code's energy efficiency standards* hosted by WALGA in June.

The Policy Team also discussed the review of WALGA's Coastal Planning Advocacy Position. A final draft of the position will be considered by the Policy Team at its next meeting and be provided for consideration at the December meeting of State Council.

## 7.2 Key Activity Reports

### 7.2.1 Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio

*By Narelle Cant, Executive Manager Advocacy*

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Key Activity Report from the Advocacy Portfolio to the September 2022 State Council meeting be noted.**

*The Advocacy Portfolio comprises the following work units:*

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

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

#### Rates Campaign

Throughout June and July, WALGA ran a competition and paid media campaign with Seven West Media on how rates make our local communities a better place to live. The campaign aimed to showcase Local Government as delivering value for money, by demonstrating the positive impact of rates. The campaign was also supported by digital marketing through WALGA's website, social media and electronic newsletters.

The 2022 campaign outperformed all 2021 metrics with 15 per cent less investment, for example hits to the campaign page on the WALGA website increased by 24 per cent, with 7,668 page views.

To increase engagement, a "Win Your Rates" Competition was again incorporated into the campaign. There were 118,147 entries, which was a 19 per cent increase on 2021 entries. Of these, 18,170 were unique entries, a 25 per cent increase on last year's competition.

WALGA President Karen Chappel conducted several media interviews on rates during the lead up to the campaign, including:

- TV interview with Channel 9 News (55,000 viewers)
- Radio interview with ABC Radio Great Southern (65,000 listeners)
- Radio interview with ABC Radio Perth Drive (12,000 listeners).

Market research was run pre-campaign to identify the understanding of and interest in rates with WA ratepayers. In addition, the research gathered information on the perception of rates, specifically where revenue from rates goes and the value of rates. Post campaign research will revisit the understanding, interest and impact of rates, as well as measure campaign awareness and recall. The final report will be delivered in September 2022.

#### Media

##### Local Government Reform

Following Minister Carey's announcement of the finalisation of the State Government's Local Government Reform package on Sunday 3 July, WALGA issued a [media statement](#) that day and President Karen Chappel participated in the following media:

- Media interview with Geof Parry Channel 7 News on Sunday, 3 July (155,000 viewers)
- Radio interview with ABC Great Southern (51,000 listeners)
  - News grabs running on ABC Radio over two days
- Comments in a story in The West Australian newspaper (124,000 circulation).

### **Future of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades discussion**

WALGA President Karen Chappel provided media commentary on WALGA's Position Paper on the Future of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades via the following media channels:

- Interview with ABC Regional Radio (65,000 listeners)
- Interview with ABC Country Hour (listeners unknown)
- Statement on GWN TV News (45,000 viewers)
- Comments in The Countryman Newspaper (6,000 circulation)
  - Note: this story also ran in Manjimup-Bridgetown Times and MidWest Times Northern Guardian
- Comments in Farm Weekly Newspaper (15,000 circulation)

### **Economic Briefing Campaign**

WALGA's Quarterly Economic Briefing offers comprehensive information on the Local Government Cost Index, along with broader insights on the Western Australian economy. WALGA launched the [July edition of the Economic Briefing](#) on 21 July through an integrated campaign strategy, with the key objective of increasing the reach of the publication, promoting its value, and profiling the economics expertise within WALGA.

The campaign for the July edition included a newly designed website, publication and infographic, two LinkedIn blogs (targeting finance managers, Local Government leaders and the broader business community) and articles in WALGA's electronic newsletters.

In the first eight days since the campaign launched there have been 478 unique website views, which is 600% more than the last edition and 540% more than the July edition last year.

All digital activity will be tracked and reported for future learnings and improvements.

### **Quarterly Services Report**

In mid-July, WALGA sent a freshly designed Quarterly Services Report to members, focused on services uptake. The Quarterly Services Report was sent using our email marketing tool to allow measurement of open rates and click through so we can better understand levels of engagement and areas for improvement.

### **Energy Project Promotional Videos**

During June, three Local Governments involved in the Energy Project (a joint renewable energy procurement project) participated in videos produced by Synergy, with WALGA's involvement. The three Councils showcased in the videos were Shire of Morawa, City of Kwinana and Shire of Dandaragan. The videos will be used to promote the Project, including at the Energy Week Local Government Virtual Session on Monday, 22 August, and the Local Government Convention plenary session, "Leading the Way for Climate Resilient Regions".

### **Local Government Convention and Trade Exhibition**

Registration for the 2022 Local Government Convention and Trade Exhibition is open. The event will be held at Crown Perth, from Sunday, 2 October to Tuesday, 4 October.

This year's theme is "Embracing Change" and the conference program will explore current and anticipated changes to the Local Government landscape, and how the sector can collaborate to inform, guide and embrace change. Speakers secured include:

- Mr Simon Trott, CEO, Rio Tinto Iron Ore
- Hon Catherine King MP, Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
- Hon Kristy McBain MP, Federal Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
- Bernard Salt AM, one of Australia's leading social commentators
- Dr Craig Challen, OAM, the Australian cave diver that was part of the rescue of 12 boys and their coach in the 2018 Thai Cave Rescue



- Former coach of the Australian men's cricket team, Justin Langer AM.

This year's event will be supported by an integrated marketing and communications strategy including:

- Personalised event marketing targeting Local Government members that have not been to a Convention or not attended in recent years
- Pre and post marketing campaign
- Media opportunities and live social media during the event
- Refined feedback strategy, with in-situ surveys
- Updated Convention collateral, including a new look and feel brochure, and staff promotional collateral (including social media tiles)
- Post event sponsor profiling and revised sponsorship packages.

The Exhibition is selling well with 80% of the available booths sold as at end July.

### **ALGA NGA22**

There was a record number of WA representatives (85) at ALGA's NGA in Canberra in June, with eight motions from WA on the agenda.

The event itself, WA motions and the many WA speakers and panel members were highlighted by a WALGA social media campaign, which also provided key updates from the conference on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

## 7.2.2 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio

*By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager Infrastructure*

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Key Activity Report from the Infrastructure Portfolio to the September 2022 State Council meeting be noted.**

*The Infrastructure Portfolio comprises the following work units:*

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

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

### Roads

#### **Condition Assessment of Roads of Regional Significance**

Funding has been provided through the State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement to perform visual condition surveys and video of Significant sealed roads (ROADS 2040). The first two phases of this project, covering the Mid-West, Great Southern and Goldfields-Esperance regions have been completed. Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) have been appointed for the next phase covering the Wheatbelt region and work has commenced.

#### **Local Government Transport and Roads Research and Innovation Program**

WALGA and Main Roads are developing a research program that will deliver practical guidance for Local Governments to enhance productivity and identify best practice initiatives. An operations team of Local Government and Main Roads practitioners have identified and prioritised projects for the program. WALGA and Main Roads are developing the scope of works for the selected projects and project work will commence in the next quarter.

#### **WALGA Road Visual Condition Assessment Manual Update**

WALGA is working with the IPWEA WA Asset Management Committee to review and update the Road Visual Condition Assessment Manual, originally published in 2016. The Manual provides the guidelines for the manual collection of visual surface condition data and has been used widely across WA. The update is forecast to be completed by November/December 2022.

#### **Transport and Roads Forum 2023**

WALGA has commenced early planning for the next Transport and Roads Forum. It is intended that the Forum take place in March 2023 and will be run as a joint event with the WALGA Field Day, in which various road-working machinery is displayed by suppliers. The event will be held at Canning Show Grounds.

### Funding

#### **State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement**

The current Agreement expires in June 2023 and negotiations for a new Agreement are proceeding. The sector is represented and led in the negotiation process by the Local Government delegates to SAC with input from the Regional Road Group Chairs and a reference group of senior Local Government officers. Decisions regarding a proposed agreement will need to be made by State Council with input from the Zones later in 2022. WALGA and Main Roads are meeting fortnightly to facilitate the process. The State Government has indicated that a new agreement should provide an increased focus on Aboriginal employment, use of recycled materials and road safety.

## Urban and Regional Transport

### Local Government Cycling Reference Group

WALGA will reconvene the Local Government Cycling Reference Group in September 2022, to seek feedback from Local Government officers on key matters for advocacy concerning cycling and eRideables.

## Utilities

### Underground Power

WALGA staff met with and supported Local Governments that are working with Western Power to deliver projects within the Network Renewal Undergrounding Program Pilot (NRUPP) and Round 6 of the State Underground Power Program. State Government consideration of an on-going Network Renewal Undergrounding Program has progressed and it is proposed that funding for this be included in the WALGA submission for the 2023/24 State Budget.

WALGA met with the Economic Regulation Authority concerning street lighting, underground power and non-references services. The Authority is yet to publish its findings or decision in relation to the proposed investment by Western Power in undergrounding the distribution network over the coming five years.

### Telecommunications

A Working Group including representation from ALGA established by the Federal Telecommunications Powers and Immunities Reference Group is considering options concerning regulations governing deployment of multi-function (Smart) poles. Telecommunications carriers are advocating strongly to the Federal Government that 5G antennae and multi-function poles be added to the Low Impact facilities Determination (LIFD), which would mean that no planning approval is required prior to their installation. It seems unlikely that the Group will be able to agree a recommendation to the Minister.

## Road Safety

### Road Safety Ratings for Local Government Roads Project

As part of a project to develop a new tool or adapt an existing tool to evaluate the safety of Local Government roads, WALGA recently held consultation workshops across WA. These workshops provided very useful information to inform the direction of the project and support the adaptation or development of a tool to best suit the needs of Local Governments. With this information as a basis, WALGA will begin the process of developing/adapting a tool. WALGA will pilot the new tool in the first two quarters of 2023 and are currently seeking interested Local Governments to participate.

### Road Safety Council Update

The Road Safety Council met on 29 June. The Minister responsible for road safety, the Hon Paul Papalia MLA, attended the meeting to introduce Ms Katie-Hodson-Thomas as the newly appointed Chair of the Road Safety Council. The Minister also thanked the outgoing Chair, Mr Iain Cameron, and reflected on his remarkable contribution to road safety. The Road Safety Council acknowledged Mr Cameron's leadership and welcomed Ms Hodson-Thomas. Other matters considered at the meeting, included: a planned review of the regulations for eRideables, further discussion on the governance of the Road Trauma Trust Account, and a presentation from Main Roads WA on the benefits of decreasing speed limits.

### Demonstration Project – Local Government Road Safety Management System

The Shire of Manjimup, one of three Local Governments that WALGA has worked with for this demonstration project, endorsed a Road Traffic Safety Policy at their July Council meeting. This is a major achievement towards embedding good practice road safety into the strategic and operational business of the Council. This work and the demonstration project will be showcased at the Australasian Road Safety Conference in September.

## 7.2.3 Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio

*By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services*

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Key Activity Report from the Member Services Portfolio to the September 2022 State Council meeting be noted.**

*The Member Services Portfolio comprises the following work units:*

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

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

### Association and Corporate Governance

#### Guidelines for Appointments to Boards and Committees

The [guidelines](#) governing WALGA's process for nominations and appointments to more than 60 Government and other external boards and committees have been updated by State Council. Outcomes of the Selection Committee's update of the guidelines include greater clarity of processes and modernisation of language. Diversity and gender equity considerations have also been reviewed. Elected Members and senior officers with an interest in nominating for any vacancy are encouraged to consult the guidelines to develop an understanding of the process and the assessment criteria.

### Commercial Development

#### Energy

WALGA's Energy Project has completed its first operating quarter of fully implemented activity. Report data has been received and currently being analysed. A report relating to the projects early activity, and follow up presentations will be made. A webinar was broadcast to support the billing and account management of project activity.

#### Construction

The first category of the new Construction Preferred Supplier Panel (PSP) has been implemented for the supply of Modular and Prefabricated Dwellings. WALGA will shortly be tendering for additional categories of new building construction, building refurbishment, demolition, earthworks and site remediation. Through development of this new Panel WALGA is commissioning a new set of legal terms, and working with the industry and representative bodies to address some of the pressure points within the construction sector.

#### Preferred Supplier Development

There are currently Tenders out for five of the PSP Panels, that are anticipated to collectively add approximately 40 new suppliers to the WALGA Program. With the Panel terms now renewed in two year increments, the first of the post-transition panels is coming up for review and recontracting, with several other panels now in the review phase. Some changes have been made to the structures and definitions of the legal services category. A new set of draft specifications has been developed and released to support use of the Roads Panel.

### Investment Services

Following a presentation to the WALGA State Council Strategic Forum, a new project is being scoped to develop Investment advisory and management services. Early stage project scoping (Research and Development) has commenced to inform the development of a formal business case. The project aims to provide financial advisory capability and investment vehicle mechanisms to optimise the level of investment returns on reserves and cash equity held within the Local Government sector.

### Sustainable Fleet and Transport Infrastructure

The WALGA Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) will be enhanced with EV fleet, and related charging infrastructure, concurrent to a potential project for EV transition grant funding. A new category of supply for the fleet contract has also been tendered in the area of Fleet Management Advisory Services, with a view to supporting EV transition strategies and evolving sustainable transport networks.

### Commercial Management

#### Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) Annual Report

During the 2021-22 Q3 period the program delivered \$103.33 million of goods, services and works, providing estimated savings of \$3.73 million.

The Q4 operating quarter ending June 2022 is open for reporting with 87.05% of reports submitted with reported expenditure of \$98.32 million for the quarter. Year to date WALGA has supplied approximately \$380 million of goods, services and works under the program.

Reported Expenditure 2021/22 FYTD



### Employee Relations

#### HR Forums

On Friday, 29 July WALGA Employee Relations hosted a successful Metro HR Forum at Wembley Golf Course. 70 Local Government HR/IR practitioners attended the Forum to hear presentations from the team on topics including union right of entry, State industrial claims, managing disciplinary processes, WHS Mentally Healthy Workplace Codes of Practice, HR issues in contemporary workplaces and a general ER news update. A Regional HR Forum with a similar program was delivered in Merredin on 12 August with 32 attendees.

## Webinar on Salary and Workforce Survey

WALGA hosted a webinar on 24 July with Salary One to deliver the results of the 2021-22 WALGA Salary and Workforce Survey and to launch a new Position Description Library for WALGA Employee Relations subscribers. 68 WA Local Governments representing 16,409 employees out of a possible 23,000 employees in the sector completed the comprehensive survey which captured survey data for 3,500 salaries for 140 job roles.

## Governance and Procurement

### Local Government Legislative Reform

The working group tasked with the detailed design of the new legislation continues to progress work on the Local Government Act amendments. Meetings have been held that have considered issues relating to earlier intervention and effective regulation and the potential workings of the Office of the Inspector, together with matters pertaining to Electoral Reforms and Transitional Arrangements. Electoral reforms relate to the transitional arrangements for directly elected Mayors and Shire Presidents for Band 1 and 2 Local Governments, reduction in Councillor numbers and for Wards to be abolished for bands 3 and 4. WALGA will provide regular updates to the sector as the legislative reform process progresses and information is able to be shared.

## Training

WALGA Training has successfully added the Certificate III in Local Government (LGA30120) onto our scope of registration with the Training Accreditation Council (TAC). We recently have submitted a tender applying to be appointed to the preferred supplier panel with the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) in preparation to launch the Certificate III in Local Government as a Traineeship.

The previous financial year has seen an increase in training activity both at WALGA and training delivered at Local Governments which has resulted in an increase of 20% in revenue.

Our commitment continues to improve our training offerings, mentor and support our highly skilled trainers and develop new courses capturing emerging topics such as Culture and Behaviour training.

Our team is busy preparing for the WALGA Convention where we will promote our course offerings which now include three accredited training programs plus 54 Short courses.

### Nationally Accredited Training

- LGA50220 - Diploma of Local Government – Elected Member
- LGA30120 - Certificate III in Local Government
- 52862WA - Course in Type 1 Child Car Restraint Fitting

### Elected Member Courses

- 5 x Council Member Essential
- 10 x Professional Development

### Officer Courses

- 7 x Governance
- 5 x Procurement courses
- 3 x Communication Skills courses
- 4 x Record Management courses
- 2 x Employee Relations courses
- 1 x Waste course

### Elected Member and Officer Courses

- 2 x Strategic and Statutory Land Use Planning courses
- 4 x Emergency Management courses

### eLearning

- 13 x eLearning courses

## 7.2.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Key Activity Report from the Policy Portfolio to the September 2022 State Council meeting be noted.**

*The Policy Portfolio comprises the following work units:*

- *Economics*
- *Environment and Waste*
- *Planning and Building*
- *Resilient Communities*

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

### Economics

#### Economic Briefing

WALGA's quarterly [Economic Briefing](#) was released in July, in a refreshed and more contemporary format.

This edition focussed on the economy-wide cost pressures that are currently being experienced as a result of COVID-19 supply constraints, the outbreak of war in Ukraine, and shortages of workers. It included a closer examination of construction costs, which have been identified by members as an area of significant concern in recent months. The construction sector has been particularly hard hit by supply constraints for key materials as well as labour shortages, at a time where COVID-19 related stimulus spending has meant that activity has ramped up.

The report also contains updated forecasts for the Local Government Cost Index.

#### Local Government Economic Development

WALGA recently commenced a project to update research undertaken in 2019 that formed the basis of its [Local Government Economic Development Framework](#). This project aimed to support Local Governments to better understand the role they can play in driving local economic development. It also identified barriers and challenges to Local Government's economic development activities and to put forward solutions.

A survey of members was conducted in June 2022 to understand the current economic development landscape and to identify the key issues for local economies, with a series of focus groups also held to further explore the key themes and issues identified.

The insights gained from this research will be used to shape WALGA's support to the sector on economic issues in coming months.

#### 2022-23 State Budget Submission

Work was undertaken to develop WALGA's submission in advance of the 2023-24 State Budget. A draft submission has been provided to State Council for endorsement (see [Agenda item 5.1](#)).

#### Census Data

WALGA has received feedback from a number of members in regional WA concerned with the accuracy of the recently released Census data, particularly with respect to undercounting of population.

WALGA has elevated this issue to a national level via ALGA and has directly contacted the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to raise the sector's concerns.

The ABS recently presented to the ALGA board meeting and in coming months will provide opportunities to brief impacted Local Governments.

### **Regional Data Hub**

WALGA also participated in a testing program for the Regional Data Hub prototype website. The Regional Data Hub is being managed by the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, and will bring together publicly available information related to regional Australia (e.g. Census data, housing, industry, NBN coverage, climate etc). Once the Hub has launched, it will be searchable by Local Government area and more data sets will be added as it progresses.

### **Environment**

#### **Biosecurity**

Consultation on the review of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* has commenced. WALGA has developed a [Discussion Paper](#) identifying key issues in relation to biosecurity, which has been provided to the sector and Zones for feedback. The feedback on the Discussion Paper will inform WALGA's engagement in the Review. WALGA is meeting with the Independent Panel undertaking the Review in early September.

#### **Climate Action**

Funding has been [awarded](#) for two projects as part of the Regional Climate Alliance Pilot:

- The South Coast Alliance: Future Proofing the South Coast through Sustainable Building Design to assess member Local Government buildings and facilities to identify cost-effective emissions reduction measures.
- GVROC: Carbon Emissions Baseline Study, to identify emissions sources for the member Local Governments, promote emissions reporting and monitoring tools and support the prioritisation of new investments.

### **Planning and Building**

#### **Public Open Space Consultation Session**

On Wednesday, 27 July WALGA hosted an in-person information session in conjunction with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) on the review of the public open space (POS) policy framework, with over 40 Local Government participants. The session included the use of interactive feedback sessions to gauge the views of participants. This information will be used by DPLH to further inform recommendations to the Western Australian Planning Commission. WALGA is also currently reviewing its advocacy position on POS.

#### **Local Government Planning Showcase**

The second WALGA *Local Government Planning Showcase* will be held on 4 October 2022. The Showcase runs alongside the WALGA Convention and is an opportunity for Local Government planners to connect with peers and share new practice, policies and projects to foster relationships and share knowledge across the sector. The event showcases projects which demonstrate the breadth and depth of Local Government planning, crossing strategic and statutory planning from across the State.

#### **Planning Fees and Charges**

WALGA continues to advocate to the State Government for a review of the planning fees and charges set through the Planning and Development Regulations 2009. Following recent increases to the State Government's planning fees, WALGA has written to the Minister to request a review as a matter of priority.

#### **Environmentally Sustainable Design – Update**

In December 2021, State Council adopted a policy position to support the Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings (the Trajectory). Subsequently, WALGA released a discussion paper to outline and seek



feedback from members on the key challenges and opportunities for supporting implementation of the Trajectory in Western Australia. A key opportunity that emerged from the discussion paper, and aligns with WALGA's current policy position, is to advocate for the adoption of contemporary energy efficiency building standards as proposed by the Australian Building Codes Board in 2021. In recent months, this has been progressed through meetings with several state agencies, ministerial offices and industry associations. A more detailed update on this work can be found [here](#).

## **Resilient Communities**

### **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Co-Design Phase 2**

Phase 2 of the co-design process for the supporting materials and guidelines for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act closes on Friday, 19 August 2022. WALGA convened a meeting of the Local Government Aboriginal Heritage Reference Group to consider the draft materials and will prepare a sector submission. WALGA and DPLH delivered a co-design webinar for the sector on Wednesday, 3 August. WALGA is working with DPLH to deliver a further information session webinar in September.

### **Child Safe Policy for Local Government**

WALGA is supporting the Department of Communities and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' engagement with the sector on the development of a template Child Safe Policy for Local Government. The initial consultation period on the draft template was extended to Friday, 12 August. The template Child Safe Policy will be reviewed following this consultation and provided to State Council for consideration at the December 2022 meeting.

### **Local Government Community Safety Network**

The Local Government Community Safety Network, hosted by WALGA, WA Police and Injury Matters delivered a series of "Bite Size" webinars addressing Local Governments' role in Mental Health and Family and Domestic Violence, with a focus on prevention. Guest presenters from the Mental Health Commission and the Centre for Womens Wellbeing provided insightful and informative presentations. Approximately 50 Local Government representatives attended the webinars.

### **State Emergency Management Policy section 5.12 – Funding for Emergency Responses**

A new working group has been established by the State Emergency Management Committee to undertake a review of State Emergency Management Policy section 5.12 in order to ensure the policy is clear about which agency is responsible for payment for activities undertaken during emergency response. The Local Government sector is represented on the working group by the Shire of Dundas, Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale and WALGA. The remaining representatives are from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and WA Police. Once an updated draft Policy is developed, it will be released for emergency management sector consultation.

## STATUS REPORT ON STATE COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS To the September 2022 State Council Meeting

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	Completion Date	Officer Responsible
<p><b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 5.1</b> Review of Advocacy Positions relating to Emergency Management</p>	<p>That State Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Endorse the removal of the following Emergency Management Advocacy Positions               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1 Community Resilience</li> <li>8.2 Disaster Mitigation</li> <li>8.3 Emergency Services Levy</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Endorse the following Emergency Management Advocacy Positions:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1 Emergency Management Principles</li> <li>8.2 State Emergency Management Framework</li> <li>8.3 Sustainable Grant Funding Model for Emergency Management</li> <li>8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Act</li> <li>8.5 Resource Sharing</li> <li>8.6 Lessons Learnt Management</li> <li>8.7 Emergency Services Levy, <u>with point 3 of the position amended, so it states: The ESL should be collected by the State Government, but failing that, the administration fee should recompense Local Governments for the complete cost of administering the ESL;</u></li> <li>8.8 Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS)</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>RESOLUTION 354.5/2022</p>	<p>WALGA is continuing advocacy on new EM positions including through the 2022-23 WALGA State Budget Submission.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy</p>
<p><b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 5.2</b> New Emergency Management Advocacy Position – Community</p>	<p>That the following WALGA Advocacy Position relating to the Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM) Program be endorsed:</p> <p>8.9 <i>Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program</i></p>	<p>WALGA is continuing advocacy on expansion and funding for the CESM program, including through the 2022-23 State Budget Submission.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy</p>

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	Completion Date	Officer Responsible
Emergency Service Manager Program	<p><i>That the Association advocates for an expansion of the Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM) Program, as follows:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>All Local Governments should have the option of participating in the CESM Program.</i></li> <li>2. <i>The full cost of the CESM Program should be funded through the Emergency Services Levy.</i></li> </ol> <p>RESOLUTION 355.5/2022</p>			
<b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 5.4</b> Finance and Services Committee Minutes incorporating the 2022-23 Budget	<p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Minutes of the Finance and Services Committee meeting on 29 June 2022 be endorsed.</li> <li>2. The 2022-23 Governance Budget for the Association as recommended by the Finance and Services Committee be endorsed.</li> </ol> <p>RESOLUTION 357.5/2022</p>	Action has been taken to implement the 22/23 WALGA budget.	Complete	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
<b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 5.5</b> Selection Committee Minutes	<p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The recommendations contained in the 29 June 2022 Selection Committee Minutes be endorsed, and</li> <li>2. The resolutions contained in the 29 June 2022 Selection Committee Minutes be noted.</li> </ol> <p>RESOLUTION 358.5/2022</p>	Selection Committee appointments have been actioned	Complete	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
<b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 5.6</b> Selection Committee Guidelines	<p>That the Selection Committee Guidelines – <i>Selection Process for Appointments to State Government, Federal Government, WALGA and Other Boards and Committees</i> – be endorsed.</p> <p>RESOLUTION 359.5/2022</p>	The Selection Committee Guidelines have been updated	Complete	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
<b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 5.9</b> Honours Panel – Appointment of Non-executive Member	<p>That Ms Lynne Craigie OAM be appointed to the WALGA Honours Panel as Non-executive Member representing country interests.</p> <p>RESOLUTION 362.5/2022</p>	Lynne Craigie has been advised of her appointment and participated in the most recent Honours Panel meeting.	Complete	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	Completion Date	Officer Responsible
<b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 6.2</b> Proposed Advocacy Position on Arrangements for Management of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades	That the Proposed Advocacy Position Paper regarding the arrangements for the management of Bush Fire Brigades be noted.  RESOLUTION 363.5/2022	Proposed Advocacy Position is provided for State Council consideration at September meeting.	September 2022	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy
<b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 6.4</b> Western Power Access Arrangement Review Submission	That the submission to the Economic Regulation Authority concerning the proposed Western Power Access Arrangement 2022-23 – 2026/27 endorsed via Flying Minute on 20 April 2022 be noted.  RESOLUTION 363.5/2022	WALGA Staff met with the Economic Regulation Authority staff in July to discuss in more detail the need for clearly defined Reference services for street lighting, using examples from other jurisdictions to highlight how governance arrangements can foster cooperation between electricity distributors and Local Governments. The ERA is yet to publish its draft determination for the Western Power Access Arrangement 2023 – 2027.	Complete	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure
<b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 7.1.2</b> Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team Report	That State Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. retains Advocacy Positions:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 2.5.56 Rating Exemptions – Charitable Purposes</li> <li>b. 2.9.1 Cyber Bullying Protections</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. amends Advocacy Positions:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 2.2.2 Local Government Audit Structure, by inserting items 5 to 8 as follows:                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <i>Local Government Annual Financial Audits should be completed by the 31 October each year, so that Local Governments can reasonably comply with legislative provisions for Annual Reports and Elector Meetings.</i></li> <li>6. <i>Completion of Local Government Annual Financial Audits should not be delayed to enable completion of financial audits of a third party entity to which the Local Government is a participant or member, on the basis that each Local Government and Regional Local Government is a separate and independent entity and Australian Accounting standards equity accounting provisions already apply.</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>	The <a href="#">Advocacy Positions Manual</a> has been updated.	Complete	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	Completion Date	Officer Responsible
	<p>7. <i>Audit issues should be raised with a Local Government no more than four weeks from submission of the Annual Financial Statements to the Office of the Auditor General.</i></p> <p>8. <i>Requests the OAG to review the accounting treatment for road assets transferred from Local Government to Main Roads WA, as the approach applied in 2020/21 resulted in significant distortion of operating results for Local Government in the year in which the transfer occurs.</i></p> <p>b. 2.5.69 Surveillance Devices Act 1998 Amendment, as follows:  <i>WALGA advocates for amendment of Regulation 4 of the Surveillance Devices Regulations 1999 (WA) so that it includes “Local Government ‘Authorised Persons’ employees as defined in the Local Government Act 1995 section 5.36(1)(b) who perform law enforcement functions on behalf of the Local Government” as a class of Law Enforcement Officers for the purposes of the Surveillance Devices Act 1998 (WA).</i></p> <p>c. 2.7 Elected Member Training, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Delete items 3 and 4 as these items have been achieved, AND</li> <li>ii. Amend item 2:</li> </ul> <p>2. <i>Requests the State Government through the Minister for Local Government to provide funding assistance to compensate Local Governments for Elected Members to receive participation in universal training;</i></p> <p>3. <i>adopts WALGA Advocacy Position – Legislative Council Member Allowances – Regional Representation, as follows:</i>  <i>Position Statement: WALGA advocates to State Government through the Minister for Electoral Affairs and the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal to provide additional allowances to Members of the Legislative Council (MLC), on the proviso that they have a staffed</i></p>			

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	<p><i>office in country areas, to facilitate a regional presence of MLCs.</i></p> <p>RESOLUTION 365.5/2022</p>			
<p><b>6 July 2022</b> <b>Item 7.1.4</b> People and Place Policy Team Report</p>	<p>That State Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note the matters considered by the People and Place Policy Team at its meetings on 6 April and 18 May 2022;</li> <li>rescind its decision (resolution no. 326.2/2022) of 2 March 2022 where it relates to Advocacy Position 6.9; and</li> <li>reinstate the Advocacy Position subject to the changes endorsed by the People and Place Policy team on 22 February, that reads:</li> </ol> <p><i>6.9 Sex Industry Regulation</i> <i>Position Statement</i> <i>The Local Government sector supports in principle, the recognition and licensing of sex work in WA as it allows normal regulatory controls to be put in place, on condition that brothels should be excluded from predominantly residential areas.</i></p> <p><i>Background</i> <i>The Association has been involved in discussions / proposals to decriminalise sex work since 1999. State Council has determined the position through consultation with all member Councils (on several occasions), and consideration of feedback and representative position papers, workshops, discussions with other government agencies, support groups and members of the sex industry. The Association will only comment on regulatory, operational, amenity and cost implications that arise for Local Government from any sex work legislation – not moral issues.</i></p> <p>RESOLUTION 367.5/2022</p>	<p>The <a href="#">Advocacy Positions Manual</a> has been updated.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy</p>
<p><b>4 May 2022</b> <b>Item 5.2</b></p>	<p>That WALGA advocates to the Minister for Emergency Services and the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner for:</p>	<p>A letter was sent to the Minister for Emergency Services and Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner advising of the State Council resolution on 25 May 2022.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy</p>

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	Completion Date	Officer Responsible
Local Government Grant Scheme Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An allocation of Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGs) funding to undertake an audit of existing facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment for both Local Government Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Services (SES).</li> <li>2. Following the completion of the audit, an allocation of funding through the Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGs) to prepare a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan that:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Aligns with the principles in the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' (DLGSC) Asset Management National Framework and Guidelines, and the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.</li> <li>b. Forecasts the emergency response needs of communities across Western Australia over the next 10 years, to estimate the quantum of the facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment that will be needed.</li> <li>c. Outlines a 10 year forward plan of modifications, replacements and additions required.</li> <li>d. Investigates the extent to which future BFB facilities can be co-located with other emergency services facilities.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. The establishment of a Working Group involving WALGA, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and LGIS to oversee the preparation of the Comprehensive Asset Management Plan.</li> <li>4. Support for the Comprehensive Asset Management Plan to be reviewed every five years.</li> <li>5. Support for an increase in overall Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGs) funding pool to future capital grants that align with the Comprehensive Asset Management Plan (as updated from time to time).</li> </ol> <p>RESOLUTION 336.4/2022</p>	WALGA continuing advocacy on new this and other new EM positions including through the 2022-23 WALGA State Budget Submission.		

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	Completion Date	Officer Responsible
<p><b>1 December 2021</b> <b>Item 5.3</b> 2021 Annual General Meeting</p>	<p>That:</p> <p>1. The following resolutions from the 2021 WALGA Annual General Meeting be endorsed for action:</p> <p><u>Cost of Regional Development</u> That WALGA makes urgent representation to the State Government to address the high cost of development in regional areas for both residential and industrial land, including the prohibitive cost of utilities headworks, which has led to market failure in many regional towns.</p> <p>...</p> <p>RESOLUTION 294.7/2021</p>	<p>It is proposed to include a request for significant funding increase and re-structuring of the Regional Development Assistance Program in the WALGA submission to the 2023/24 State Budget.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure</p>
<p><b>1 December 2021</b> <b>Item 5.11</b> Constitution and Governance Review</p>	<p>That the proposed Constitution and Governance Review as outlined in this report be endorsed.</p> <p>RESOLUTION 301.7/2021</p>	<p>The Governance Review Project is now well underway. A Steering Committee has been formed, with membership including the WALGA President and Deputy President, 2 State Councillors, 2 Elected Members and 2 Chief Executive Officers together with the WALGA CEO.</p> <p>Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) have been appointed as consultants to support the Committee through their deliberations. There will be ongoing engagement with State Council, the Zones and other stakeholders throughout the Project, with the aim of presenting an item on principles and framework to 2022 Annual General Meeting and looking to finalise a report by the end of this calendar year.</p> <p>Any proposed constitutional amendments will need to be scheduled for the 2023 WALGA AGM for Member consideration and endorsement.</p>	<p>October 2023</p>	<p>Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services</p>
<p><b>3 September 2021</b> <b>Item 5.2</b> Tender Exemption Provisions – General Practitioner Services</p>	<p>That WALGA:</p> <p>1. Adopt a new Advocacy Position Statement under ‘Local Government Legislation - Tender Exemption General Practitioner Services’:</p> <p><i>WALGA advocates for the inclusion of a tender exemption for General Practitioner (GP) services under Part 4, Division 2 of the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996, to support Local Governments to secure and retain necessary primary health care services for their communities; and</i></p>	<p>1. Correspondence has been sent to the Minister for Local Government advocating for this position.</p> <p>2. The Minister for Local Government held a roundtable discussion with effected Local Governments on this issue. The Ministers Office and the Department of Local Government are carrying out further research on this matter.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services</p>



MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	Completion Date	Officer Responsible
	2. Undertake additional research in support of the Advocacy Position with the following aims: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify State and Federal Government policy settings and other factors contributing to gaps in primary health care services in regional communities; and</li> <li>b. Quantify the number of regional Local Governments that have current contracts, or are proposing to enter into contracts, for General Practitioner services and the associated costs to Local Government incurred.</li> </ol> RESOLUTION 264.5/2021			
<b>3 September 2021</b> <b>Item 6.1</b> Stop Puppy Farming Legislation	1. That the update on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 be noted. 2. That: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. any additional costs incurred by a Local Government in administering the Dog Act be paid by the State Government; and</li> <li>b. the Fees and Charges set in Regulations are reviewed bi-annually and at minimum, be adjusted by the Local Government Cost Index.</li> </ol> RESOLUTION 275.5/2021	Correspondence has been sent to the Minister for Local Government advising of resolution 2.	Ongoing	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services
<b>5 May 2021</b> <b>Item 5.4</b> Review of the State Industrial Relations System	That WALGA: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seek confirmation from the State Government on whether it intends to re-introduce legislation for Local Governments to operate solely in the State Industrial Relations System.</li> <li>2. If the State Government reintroduces legislation to require all Local Governments to operate within the State Industrial Relations System, continue to advocate for the State Government to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Amend the <i>Industrial Relations Act 1979</i> (WA) to include additional provisions to modernise the State IR system; and</li> <li>b. Provide adequate funding and resourcing to ensure Local Governments are equipped with</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	The Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 (IR Bill) was given <a href="#">Royal Assent</a> on 22 December 2021 as Act No. 30 of 2021. Part 1 of the <i>Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Act 2021</i> (WA) (IRLA Act) commenced on 22 December, which deals with preliminary matters. All other parts of the IRLA Act will be proclaimed by publishing a notice of proclamation in the Western Australian Government Gazette.  The declaration that all Local Governments are not national system employers will have the effect of transitioning all Local Governments to the State industrial relations system if it is endorsed by Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Hon Tony Burke MP.	Ongoing	Tony Brown Executive Director Member Services

MEETING	RESOLUTION	COMMENT	Completion Date	Officer Responsible
	<p>the appropriate tools and training to enable a smooth transition.</p> <p>RESOLUTION 207.2/2021</p>	<p>WALGA has written to the New Minister for Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Hon Tony Burke MP advising that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) WA Local Governments do not support the legislation mandating Local Governments to operate in the State IR system.</li> <li>(b) However, if the political will of both the WA and Federal Governments are such that WA Local Governments will be declared to be non-national system employers under the FW Act, Local Governments and WALGA wish to work constructively with all parties to ensure any transition is smooth and appropriately resourced to minimise the impact on Local Government employers and employees.</li> <li>(c) If you elect to provide in-principal support or endorse a declaration to transfer Local Governments to the State IR system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Encourage the WA Government to agree to a six-month transitional timeframe from the 'relevant day' before Local Government are required to comply with the State IR system.</li> <li>ii. Enact Federal transitional legislation to deal with proceedings on foot in the Federal IR system at the time of the transition.</li> <li>iii. Encourage the WA Government to allocate appropriate funding and resources to assist the sector with the transition to the State IR system. Currently no funding has been committed to assist with any proposed transition.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		