

Great Eastern Country Zone Minutes

Thursday, 15 August 2024

**Hosted by the Shire of Kellerberrin
Shire of Kellerberrin Recreation
and Leisure Centre**

Meeting commenced at 9:36am

ZONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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

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

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ATTACHMENTS

The following are provided as attachments to the Minutes:

1. Item 5.1.1 Office of the Auditor General presentation
2. Item 7.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission report
3. Item 7.5 Water Corporation report

1. OPENING, ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

1.1. OPENING

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:36am.

1.2. ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	2 Voting Delegates from each Member Council
Shire of Bruce Rock	Cr Stephen Strange (State Council Representative)
Shire of Cunderdin	Deputy President Cr Tony Smith Mr Stuart Hobley, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Dowerin	President Cr Robert Trepp Mr Brian Jones, A/ Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Kellerberrin	Cr Dennis Reid Mr Raymond Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer (voting delegate)
Shire of Koorda	President Cr Jannah Stratford Mr Zac Donovan, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Merredin	Mr Craig Watts, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Mount Marshall	President Cr Tony Sachse (Zone Chair)
Shire of Mukinbudin	President Cr Gary Shadbolt
Shire of Narembeen	President Cr Scott Stirrat Mr Ben Forbes, Executive Manager Corporate Services
Shire of Nungarin	President Cr Pippa de Lacy Mr David Nayda, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Tammin	Deputy President Cr Tanya Nicholls
Shire of Trayning	Ms Leanne Parola, Chief Executive Officer, (appointed by Council as a voting delegate for August Zone meeting)

Shire of Wyalkatchem	President Cr Owen Garner
	Deputy President Cr Christy Petchell
	Cr Rod Lawson Kerr (observer)
	Ms Sabine Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

GUESTS	
Office of the Auditor General	Mr Grant Robinson, Assistant Auditor General
Main Roads WA	Mr Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt

WALGA	
	Ms Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance
	Ms Negar Nili, Policy Officer Transport and Roads
	Ms Meghan Dwyer, Executive Officer Governance
	Ms Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy (electronically)

1.3. APOLOGIES

MEMBERS

Shire of Bruce Rock	President Cr Ram Rajagopalan
	Mr John Merrick, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Cunderdin	President Cr Alison Harris
Shire of Dowerin	Deputy President Cr Nadine McMorran
Shire of Kellerberrin	Deputy President Cr Emily Ryan
Shire of Kondinin	President Cr Kent Mouritz
	Deputy President Cr Bev Gangell
	Mr David Burton, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Merredin	President Cr Mark McKenzie
	Deputy President Cr Renee Manning
Shire of Mount Marshall	Deputy President Cr Nick Gillett
	Mr Ben McKay, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Mukinbudin	Ms Tanika McLennan, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Narembeen	Ms Rebecca McCall, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Nungarin	Deputy President Cr Gary Coumbe
Shire of Tammin	Cr Nick Caffell
	Ms Joanne Soderlund, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

Shire of Trayning	President Cr Melanie Brown
	Cr Michelle McHugh
Shire of Westonia	President Cr Mark Crees
	Deputy President Cr Ross Della Bosca
	Mr Bill Price, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Yilgarn	President Cr Wayne Della Bosca
	Deputy President Cr Bryan Close
	Mr Nic Warren, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

GUESTS	
Regional Development Australia WA	Mr Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development
CBH Group	Ms Kellie Todman, Manager Governance and Industry Relations
Wheatbelt Development Commission	Ms Renee Manning, Principal Regional Development Officer – Central East
Water Corporation	Ms Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer & Stakeholder – Goldfields & Agricultural Region

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT	
Mr Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor	
Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region	
Hon Steve Martin MLC, Member for the Agricultural Region	
Hon Mia Davies MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt	

WALGA	
Mr James McGovern, Manager Governance & Procurement	
Ms Tracey Peacock, Regional Road Safety Advisor	

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nil

5. GUEST SPEAKERS / DEPUTATIONS

5.1. SPEAKERS FOR THE AUGUST ZONE MEETING

5.1.1. Office of the Auditor General

Mr Grant Robinson, Assistant Auditor General

Mr Grant Robinson presented on the conduct of Local Government audits, provided commentary on audit findings recently reported to Parliament, future financial audit priorities and performance audit planning, and optimal use of the Audit Readiness Better Practice Guide.

The presentation is attached (Attachment 1).

The Zone meeting adjourned for a short break before reconvening.

6. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Nil

7. AGENCY REPORTS

7.1. DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SPORT AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

The DLGSC report was submitted for the Zone with the Agenda.

Noted.

7.2. WHEATBELT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Renee Manning, Principal Regional Development Officer – Central East was an apology for the meeting.

The Wheatbelt Development Commission report was circulated to all CEO's and Delegates prior to the meeting and is provided as an attachment (Attachment 2).

Noted.

7.3. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHEATBELT

Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development was an apology for the meeting.

The RDAW report was submitted for the Zone with the Agenda.

Noted.

7.4. MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Mohammad Siddiqui, Regional Manager Wheatbelt

The MRWA report was submitted for the Zone with the Agenda. Mr Siddiqui spoke to the report.

Mr Siddiqui also provided some information on a MRWA project currently underway to assess the results of bringing maintenance works back in house to MRWA - "Realisation of In House Maintenance". The project aims to assess the results transparently and be able to report on them. Initial results indicate that there have been benefits, including reduced costs and increased satisfaction.

Noted.

7.5. WATER CORPORATION

Rebecca Bowler, Manager Customer and Stakeholder was an apology for the meeting.

The Water Corporation report has been submitted and is attached (Attachment 3).

The following matters were brought forward in the meetings proceedings.

11. WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

11.3. STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS – 4 SEPTEMBER 2024

Ms Nicole Matthew, WALGA Executive Manager Policy joined the meeting via audio to provide the Zone with an overview of State Council Agenda items 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 and answer any questions from the Zone.

11.1. STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cr Stephen Strange

Cr Strange provided an update to the meeting on various WALGA matters including:

- The endorsement of the WALGA 2024-2025 WALGA Budget
- The WALGA CEO Performance Review
- WALGA Election Campaign
- The Local Government House Trust buyout of the WALGA building (170 Railway Parade, West Leederville)
- The Local Government Awards night.
- A presentation to State Council from Mr Leon Mclvor, Deputy Director General, Housing and Assets, Department of Communities about housing initiatives. Mr Mclvor advised that the Department was open to hearing housing proposals from Local Governments.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Dowerin
Seconded: Shire of Nungarin

That the State Councillor Report be received.

CARRIED

The meeting returned to the order of business.

8. MINUTES

8.1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2024

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone meeting held on 13 June 2024 have previously been circulated to Member Councils.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Wyalkatchem
Seconded: Shire of Dowerin

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Great Eastern Country Zone held on 13 June 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings subject to the following amendment

- **Record Cr Christy Petchell, Shire of Wyalkatchem as an apology, not an attendee**

CARRIED

8.2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2024

Nil

8.3. MINUTES OF THE GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 AUGUST 2024

The Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 7 August 2024 were provided as an attachment to the Agenda.

The Executive Committee requested updates on several matters, which were dealt with in this Agenda:

- Presentation from the Officer of the Auditor General – Presentation from Mr Grant Robinson at item 5.

- Update on the roll out of Automatic Transfer Unit (ATU's) and other technology factors for telecommunications – The Wheatbelt Development Commission provided a written update to the Zone.
- WALGA staff attend to provide an update on WALGA actions in regard to priority agriculture areas and renewable energy, and the WALGA state election campaign.
- Software updates and cybersecurity requirements for Local Governments. Following discussion with the CEO of Shire of Westonia, there is no item required for the Zone to consider.
- A Local Government Convention update is provided at item 9.6.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Nungarin

Seconded: Shire of Narembeen

That the Minutes of the Great Eastern Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on 6 August 2024 be received.

CARRIED

9. ZONE BUSINESS

9.1. OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL AUDIT FEES RESPONSE

Submitted by the Shire of Koorda

Background

At its Ordinary Council Meeting held on 17 July 2024, the Shire of Koorda considered an item: OAG Audit Fees Response. The Council made the following resolution:

That Council;

- 1. Request Zone, advocate that Council be advised of fee when it is known to the OAG*
- 2. Request break down of fee that is OAG and Contract Auditor fee*
- 3. Reiterate State Council Motion to see the Parliamentary enquiry*

The item considered by the Shire of Koorda was provided as an attachment to the Agenda.

Executive Officer Comment

At the WALGA State Council meeting held on 10 July 2024, State Council considered an Emerging Issue on this item, submitted by Cr Phillip Blight, Central Country Zone.

State Council made the following resolution:

That State Council:

- 1. Objects to the Office of the Auditor General's audit fees increases for the 2023-24 audits of accounts and annual financial report of Local Governments; and*
- 2. Requests the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations to conduct an Inquiry into the OAG's performance of audits and increased audit fees to Local Governments.*

The item considered by State Council was provided as an attachment to the Agenda.

WALGA has written to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations requesting a meeting between to discuss the request further.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Koorda
Seconded: Shire of Cunderdin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone write to the Officer of the Auditor General, Minister for Local Government and the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, supporting WALGA State Council's resolution requesting an Inquiry into the OAG's performance of audits and increased audit fees to Local Governments.

CARRIED

9.2. UPDATE TO ASSOCIATE OFFICER FOR THE ZONES AUSTRALIAN TAXATION OFFICE (ATO) ONLINE PORTAL

By Yuhan Richards, Finance Manager

Background

Managing the Zones for taxation, registration, and annual reporting requirements occurs through the ATO online services. To ensure adequate cover of authorised officers, the Zone is requested to approve the access to the following WALGA Finance team member:

Associates

Richard Andrew Murray Chief Financial Officer

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Nungarin
Seconded: Shire of Tammin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone authorise Richard Andrew Murray as Associate for the Great Eastern Country Zone.

CARRIED

9.3. CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

Draft Regional Education Strategy

On 22 July, the Department of Education released a [draft Regional Education Strategy](#). The Strategy aims to provide a framework to guide more effective delivery of regional education, focusing on improved educational and wellbeing opportunities across four pillars:

Pillar 1: Build the capability of our regional workforce

Pillar 2: Expand curriculum delivery

Pillar 3: Strengthen support for student wellbeing
Pillar 4: Develop partnerships to create opportunity

Country Zones and Local Governments are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the strategy, particularly given the relevance of the Strategy to matters raised by the Great Southern Zone with support from other country zones.

The consultation period closes on Friday, 20 September 2024.

[More information is available here.](#)

In addition WALGA is currently working with the Department of Education to facilitate direct engagement with regional sector and will advise on the details shortly.

Western Australia's Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030

The Waste Authority is leading a review of the Western Australia's Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 (waste strategy). The review provides an opportunity to reflect on how we are performing, what is working, and what we could do differently.

In 2023, the Waste Authority sought feedback on the [Directions paper](#), which set out key areas it proposed to focus on in the review. Consultation feedback was provided through surveys and written submissions, and informed development of the revised waste strategy, which is now open for 12 weeks of public consultation.

The revised [waste strategy](#) and 1-page priority summaries can be accessed at the bottom of this page.

The updated waste strategy is available to review and provide feedback until 5:00pm on Wednesday, 21 August.

Noted.

9.4. WALGA STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

WALGA advocates on behalf of the Local Government sector to secure ongoing funding through budget allocations at a State and Federal level.

This involves providing Government with a submission of initiatives that will deliver significant benefits to communities across Western Australia.

When Federal and State Budgets are handed down, WALGA provides analysis, focusing on what the announcements and funding initiatives mean for Local Governments in Western Australia.

WALGA's Budget Submission 2024-25 sought funding for a range of initiatives to bolster the resilience of our communities to natural disasters, including increased funding for the Local Government Grant Scheme, Community Emergency Services Managers, bushfire mitigation activities, emergency planning and preparedness, building back better and improving road access in bushfire prone areas.

Despite strong advocacy by WALGA and Local Governments, the State Government has again not allocated any additional funding in the Budget for Community Emergency Services Managers (CESMs) in this year's Budget. WALGA's Budget Submission called for increased Emergency Services Levy funding to be provided to fully fund existing and additional CESMs. WALGA will continue to advocate that all interested Local Governments should have access to the CESM Program.

The full copy of the WALGA State Budget Submission 2024-25 and the WALGA analysis, please visit the [State Budget 2024-25 page on the WALGA website](#). Information on the [Federal Budget 2024-25](#) is also available.

Noted.

9.5. WALGA STATE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Background

Following a State Council workshop in March, significant progress has been made with the WALGA State Election campaign. The 2025 State Election Priorities document has been prepared, a microsite built and public campaign planned. WALGA will share social media assets for Local Governments to personalise for issues facing their community and liaise towards the end of August and September regarding local stories that can strengthen WALGA's advocacy in key areas.

The key areas are:

Communities of the Future

- Climate Resilient
 - Urban Tree Canopy
 - Responding the Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer Biosecurity Emergency
 - Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure
 - Coastal Management
- Disaster Ready
 - Consolidated Emergency Services Act
 - Emergency Service Funding
 - More CESMS
 - Effective Local Emergency Management Arrangements
 - Address Gaps in Telecommunications Coverage and Resilience
 - State Government Funding for the Underground Power Program
- Low Carbon
 - Energy
 - Transport: Public EV charging infrastructure
 - Waste
 - Industries of the Future
- Safer Communities
 - Safer Roads: Save lives and reduce injury on high-speed local roads
 - Safer Student Crossings

- Connected & Inclusive
 - Renew our Libraries
 - Meeting growing demand for sport and recreation facilities
 - Increase investment in arts and cultural facilities
 - More accessible community infrastructure
 - Active Travel
 - Housing
 - Addressing Housing Supply
 - Overcoming Housing Workforce Constraints

Local Government for the Future

- Local Government Reform
 - Review of Fees and Charges
 - Rating Exemptions
- Efficient Regulation
 - Aboriginal Heritage
 - Biosecurity
 - Native Vegetation
 - Public Health
- Local Planning
- Workforce Development

Noted.

9.6. WALGA HONOURS RECIPIENTS

By Chantelle O'Brien, Governance Support Officer

Background

WALGA celebrated their 2024 Honours awards recipients at an event on Friday, 2 August at Winthrop Hall. For the first time, a WALGA awards event was held solely to acknowledge and appreciate the extraordinary efforts of Elected Members and Local Government Officers in service of their Local Government, the sector and the community.

There were 46 recipients of Honours awards in the 2024 program, including two Local Government Medal recipients. Four new WALGA Life Members were also inducted.

3 Honours recipients were from the Great Eastern Country Zone:

Cr Eileen O'Connell	Shire of Nungarin	Eminent Services Award
Mr Rodney Forsyth	Shire of Kellerberrin	Eminent Service Award
Mr Darren Mollenoyux	(ex) Shire of Bruce Rock	Local Government Officers Distinguished Service Award

Congratulations to all Honours recipients!

Nominations for the 2025 Honours Program will open early next year.

Noted.

9.7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONVENTION 2024 AND WALGA AGM

Local Government Convention

The Local Government Convention is being held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre from Tuesday, 8 October to Thursday, 10 October.

The Convention brings together Elected Members, suppliers, Council officers and key stakeholders as part of a unique program of professional development, networking and business opportunities.

The theme of this year's Convention is Innovation Ecosystem. Innovation Ecosystem speaks to the ability of WALGA and the sector to foster dynamic change within the fabric of WA through collaboration, promotion and daring to think big.

It will evoke new ideas, heightened passion for communities and facilitate connections for ongoing skills and ideas sharing within the Local Government sector.

It serves the purpose of highlighting the rich expertise base within WALGA available as a resource to members and the benefits that can be leveraged for all of WA when we work as a collective.

To register for the Convention use the following link: [LGC24 Registration](#).

WALGA AGM and Member Motions

WALGA's 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held during with the Local Government Convention, at 2:30pm on Wednesday, 9 October. An important feature of the AGM is the opportunity provided for member Local Governments to submit a Member Motion, and to seek the support of the sector in important matters of policy. Guidelines for submitting Member Motions can be found [here](#). The deadline for the submission of Member Motions is 5:00pm on 23 August.

CEOs have been provided with information to register Voting Delegates and Proxies. Registrations should be completed by 5:00pm on 27 September.

Noted.

9.8. WHEATBELT ZONE FORUM 2024

The Avon-Midland Country Zone has invited the GECZ to the Wheatbelt Forum, being held on Friday, 23 August at the Northam Recreation Centre.

The WALGA Avon-Midland Country Zone is bringing together Local Governments and other stakeholders from across to region to engage on key issues including road safety and funding, emergency management, housing, cybersecurity and renewable energy.

The program for the Forum was provided as an attachment to the Agenda. Cr Sachse will be participating in the Panel session.

Please use the following link to register: [Wheatbelt Forum Registration - Wheatbelt Forum Registration \(eventsair.com\)](https://www.wheatbeltforum.com/registration) by COB 16 August.

Noted.

10. ZONE REPORTS

10.1. CHAIR REPORT

President Cr Tony Sachse

The Zone Executive met on Wednesday, 7 August. The minutes of the meeting were attached with the Agenda.

The Executive discussed upcoming speakers.

Since the meeting, the Office of the Auditor General has confirmed their attendance.

The Executive requested a representative from WALGA to attend to speak on updates regarding Agricultural Land Use and Emergency Management State Budgeting with regards to DFES and Community Emergency Service Managers (CESM's).

A written update regarding the roll out of Mobile Telephone Base Automatic Transfer Units (ATU's) for generator back up will be provided by the Wheatbelt Development Commission.

The Zone has received correspondence from the Pilbara Country Zone regarding the Live Sheep Export by Sea Bill/Act. This correspondence was attached to the Agenda.

Thank you to our visiting politicians and all the Agency representatives for presenting today.

And a reminder to all, the Avon-Midland Country Zone have invited the Zone to their Wheatbelt Zone Forum (see item 9.7).

Thanks also to the Shire of Kellerberrin for hosting us today.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Wyalkatchem

Seconded: Shire of Kellerberrin

That the Zone Chair's report be received.

CARRIED

10.2. WHEATBELT DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DEMC)

President Cr Tony Sachse

The last meeting of the Wheatbelt DEMC was on 12 June. At the time of writing the minutes are not yet available.

The 2024 [Regional Telecommunications Review](#) closed on 31 July.

The Regional Telecommunications Review takes place every 3 years. This year, the Independent Review Committee is interested in hearing about:

- the suitability of telecommunications during emergency situations
- how emerging technologies could improve connectivity
- ways telecommunications can support regional development.

A report on the findings and recommendations of the Review will be presented to the Government by December 2024.

The Wheatbelt Operational Area Support Group (OASG)/ISG is now meeting on an as needed basis, and has not met over recent months.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Mukinbudin

Seconded: Shire of Dowerin

That the Wheatbelt District Emergency Management Committee Report be received.

CARRIED

10.3. REGIONAL HEALTH ADVOCACY GROUP

President Cr Alison Harris is an apology for the meeting.

The written report was provided as an attachment to the Agenda.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Cunderdin

Seconded: Shire of Narembeen

That the Regional Health Advocacy Report be received.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Koorda
Seconded: Shire of Kellerberrin

That the Great Eastern Country Zone approach Cr Alison Harris to ask whether she would be interested in filling the vacant role on the District Leadership Group (as noted in the report).

CARRIED

10.4. WALGA ROADWISE

Tracey Peacock, Regional Road Safety Advisor was an apology for the meeting.

The WALGA RoadWise report was submitted for the Zone with the Agenda.

11. WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

11.1. STATE COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cr Strange provided his State Councillor Report earlier in the meeting.

11.2. STATUS REPORT

Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response
11 April 2024 Zone Agenda Item 9.1.2 Agricultural Land Use	<p>That the Great Eastern Country Zone recommend that WALGA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In considering Agricultural Land Use, establishes and promotes policy templates to guide Local Governments for their individual adoption to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land.2. Within the Policy includes such uses but not limited to tree planting for offsets or carbon, renewable energy generation and transmission.3. Investigates potential impacts to local government rates on rural land, that has approved long term tree planting for different purposes, for example	<p>Draft advocacy positions in relation to planning for renewable energy facilities; the need for improvements to the State planning framework to provide sufficient statutory protections for areas that have been identified as High Quality Agricultural Land; and for the State Government to develop a robust and comprehensive framework for engagement with Local Government and communities to manage impacts and realise community benefits from projects are included in the September State Council Agenda as items for decision.</p> <p>WALGA has raised these issues with the Minister for the Environment; Energy; Climate Action and Powering WA.</p>

	<p>but not limited to planting for carbon offsets, planting for clearing offsets, or planting for renewable fuels; and renewable energy investments.</p> <p>4. Provides advice to local government on what Policies or Special Area Rates should be considered for the land affected.</p>	
<p>11 April 2024 Zone Agenda Item 9.11 Enhanced and Alternative Education Opportunities for Regional WA</p>	<p>That the Great Eastern Country Zone:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports the call to action to reduce regional disadvantage in educational opportunities; 2. Agrees to write to the Minister for Education requesting action; and 3. Requests the WALGA Secretariat to advocate to State Government on this matter. 	<p>WALGA notes that the Great Eastern Country Zone supports the call to action raised by the Great Southern Zone to reduce regional disadvantage in educational opportunities and that the Zone will write to the Minister for Education on the matter.</p> <p>WALGA understands that the Great Southern Zone received a response to their letter to the Minister of Education on this issue on 24 April 2024. The letter references a number of initiatives including a \$71 million funding boost for the School of Isolated and Distance Education, a proposed expansion of VET certificates in the coming years, Education and Training Participation Plans, the support provided by the School of Special Educational Needs: Behaviour and Engagement located in Albany, the recently announced federally funded two new Regional University Study Hubs, further financial investment in the attraction and retention payments/packages, and a developing Regional Education Strategy.</p> <p>WALGA is also aware that the Great Southern Zone has raised these issues directly with Department of Education representatives at recent Zone meetings.</p>

		<p>WALGA notes that 2024-25 State Budget included an additional \$10 million for the School of Isolated and Distance Education.</p> <p>WALGA is continuing to advocate broadly on issues that intersect with regional education such as Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH). WALGA has written to the Department of Communities Deputy Director General, Housing and Assets on this matter. Department of Communities officials will present on the GROH program at the July Strategic Forum.</p> <p>On the 22 July, the Department of Education released a draft Regional Education Strategy. The Strategy aims to provide a framework to guide more effective delivery of regional education, focusing on improved educational and wellbeing opportunities across four pillars: Pillar 1: Build the capability of our regional workforce Pillar 2: Expand curriculum delivery Pillar 3: Strengthen support for student wellbeing Pillar 4: Develop partnerships to create opportunity</p> <p>Country zones and Local Governments are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the strategy, particularly given the relevance of the Strategy to matters raised by the Great Southern Zone with support from other country zones.</p> <p>The consultation period closes on Friday 20 September 2024. More information is available here.</p> <p>WALGA has partnered with the Department of Education to</p>
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		facilitate an information and feedback session on the Strategy priority pillars. The session will be held online on Wednesday 21 August 2:30 -3.:30pm. A registration link will be sent via LG Direct.
13 June 2024 Zone Agenda Item 7.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission (Housing Needs within the Wheatbelt Region)	The Great Eastern Country Zone request that WALGA lobby the State Government to fund the Wheatbelt Development Commission to conduct feasibility studies for programs (including Government Regional Officer Housing) to meet housing needs within the Wheatbelt region (including Great Eastern Country Zone Local Governments).	The Deputy Director General, Housing and Assets presented at the 10 July 2024 State Council Strategic Forum. The presentation included an offer to Local Governments to submit expressions of interest for partnership on social and affordable housing as well the Government Regional Officer Housing program, including those that request variations to the current program parameters – such as rent returns or interest free loans. WALGA continues to advocate for State Government to optimize partnership opportunities with Local Government that make capital investment in housing supply viable.

Noted.

11.3. STATE COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS – 4 SEPTEMBER 2024

Background

WALGA State Council meets five times each year and as part of the consultation process with Member Councils circulates the State Council Agenda for input through the Zone structure.

Zone delegates to consider the Matters for Decision contained in the WA Local Government Association State Council Agenda and put forward resolutions to Zone Representatives on State Council

The full State Council Agenda was provided as an attachment to the Agenda and can be found on the [WALGA website](#).

11.3.1. State Council Matters for Decision

8.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS ANALYSIS 2015-2023

By Emma Heys, Governance Specialist

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That WALGA advocate to the State Government:

1. *For an independent Local Government election audit, focusing on the Western Australia Electoral Commission's (WAEC) cost allocation methods and costing applications used, to confirm that marginal cost recovery principles are applied and that the costing program is being effectively managed.*
2. *For the requirement for the WAEC to develop and implement Service Level Agreements with Local Governments, similar to those agreements currently used in New South Wales and Victorian Local Government elections and that includes:*
 - a. *transparency of costing methodology,*
 - b. *direct engagement with Local Governments pre and post elections, and*
 - c. *the roles and responsibilities of the WAEC and Local Governments in the conduct of elections.*
3. *For the introduction of a provision for private service providers to enter the market for the conduct of Local Government elections.*
4. *For a mandated WAEC Report to Parliament specific to Local Government elections post each election cycle, outlining costs, results, voter turnout and matters for improvement both in the conduct of elections and the legislation, if relevant.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of a comprehensive review and analysis of five election cycles up to and including the 2023 Local Government election against the backdrop of legislative reforms to the Local Government electoral process in Western Australia.
- With a focus on postal elections conducted exclusively by the Western Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC), the analysis has found evidence of the rising cost of conducting Local Government elections in Western Australia.
- Elected Member feedback, costs vs service comparisons and engagement by the sector with WALGA's governance services over the 2023 Local Government election period, are the basis for the recommendations as outlined above.
- The Governance Policy Team considered this item at its meeting of 7 August and endorsed the position for consideration by State Council

8.2 ENERGY TRANSITION ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT FRAMEWORK ADVOCACY POSITION

By Daniel Thomson, Manager Economics

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse a new Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework Advocacy Position as follows:

It is essential that the energy transition currently underway delivers economic opportunities, ensures reliable and affordable electricity, and the greatest possible benefits for the community.

WALGA calls on the State Government to develop a comprehensive framework to manage the impact of the energy transition that includes local engagement and the realisation of community benefits from energy transition projects as a priority.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Western Australia's energy industry is transforming to achieve the goal of net zero emissions by 2050.
- In Western Australia there is no framework that provides a consistent approach to how proponents of major energy projects consult with local communities and how they can share in the benefits.
- WALGA will advocate for the State Government to develop a framework to guide consultation and benefit sharing with local communities during the energy transition.
- A joint meeting of the Environment Policy Team and Infrastructure Policy Team held on 10 July endorsed the position for consideration by State Council.
- This draft advocacy position should be considered in conjunction with the accompanying draft WALGA advocacy positions Renewable Energy Facilities (Item 8.3) and Priority Agriculture (Item 8.4).

8.3 RENEWABLE ENERGY FACILITIES ADVOCACY POSITION

By Kieran McGovern, Policy Officer Planning

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse a new Renewable Energy Facilities Advocacy Position as follows:

The growth in the number, size, and complexity of renewable energy facilities across Western Australia is expected to continue as energy generation and other traditional industries de-carbonise their facilities and operations. The renewable energy state planning framework requires changes to ensure it is fit for purpose to guide the ongoing development of this sector.

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

1. *Adopt a new State Planning Policy for renewable energy facilities, to replace the existing Position Statement: Renewable energy facilities, that:*
 - a. *Facilitates the orderly development of renewable energy facilities across Western Australia;*
 - b. *Outlines the key planning and environmental considerations, for the location, siting, design and operation of renewable energy facilities and their associated infrastructure;*
 - c. *Provides a framework that clearly stipulates the minimum required documentation and technical reports that need to be submitted with proposals for renewable energy facilities;*
 - d. *Supports the development of Local Planning Policies by Local Governments to further guide locally appropriate planning consideration of renewable energy facilities;*
 - e. *Provides a clear relationship with:*
 - i. *State Planning Policy 2.5 - Rural planning and Development Control Policy 3.4 - Subdivision of rural land, to ensure planning decisions adequately balance the need to protect and preserve rural land for rural purposes;*
 - ii. *State Planning Policy 2.4 - Planning for Basic Raw Materials to ensure proposals for renewable energy facilities consider their impact on basic raw material supply at the earliest stage of the planning process; and*
 - iii. *State Planning Policy 2.9 - Planning for Water to ensure water resources impacted by renewable energy facilities are identified and adequately managed.*
 - f. *Includes policy measures to address:*
 - i. *concerns relating to the location of these facilities and their associated infrastructure on agricultural land, their proximity to lot boundaries, town sites and sensitive land uses, and potential impact on airport operations and rural activities;*
 - ii. *planning for renewable energy facilities in industrial areas in relation to the coordination of these facilities, their appropriateness in the 'General Industry' zone and impacts and suitable location on heavy industry sites;*
 - iii. *the need for local engagement and the realisation of community benefits from the development of renewable energy facilities.*
2. *Review the definition of 'renewable energy facility' considering the increasing size and scope of facilities and consider creating definitions based on the scale of the facility (Utility-scale and other), and the form of facility (solar energy and wind energy).*
3. *Provide guidance to Local Governments on the consideration of green hydrogen production facilities on rural land where it is an incidental use to a renewable energy facility.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting resolution and subsequent resolution by the Great Eastern Country Zone requested *WALGA establish and promote policies to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land.*
- The Central Country Zone resolved to request WALGA to advocate to the State Government *to develop a more comprehensive and effective approach to guide the management and placement of renewable energy facilities; including but not limited to wind, solar, battery renewable diesel and associated infrastructure.*
- The existing State Government *Position Statement: Renewable energy facilities* does not adequately address these concerns, leading to inconsistent application and approvals of renewable energy facilities across the State.
- WALGA will advocate for the existing *Position Statement: Renewable energy facilities* to be amended and elevated to a State Planning Policy, including more nuanced provisions which provide greater guidance to Local Governments and applicants, and allow for renewable energy land uses to be classified as either small or large facilities.
- A joint meeting of the Environment Policy Team and Infrastructure Policy Team on 10 July endorsed the position for consideration by State Council.
- This draft advocacy position should be considered in conjunction with accompanying draft WALGA advocacy positions Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework (Item 8.2) and Priority Agriculture (Item 8.4).

8.4 PRIORITY AGRICULTURE ADVOCACY POSITION

By Kieran McGovern, Policy Officer Planning

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse a new Priority Agriculture Advocacy Position as follows:

The state planning framework should provide sufficient statutory protections for areas identified as high quality agricultural land.

WALGA calls on the State Government to:

- 1. Amend the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 to:*
 - a. Create a new model zone under Schedule 1, Part 3, Clause 16 for land identified as high quality agricultural land known as the 'Priority Agriculture' zone, with the following objectives:*
 - i. to retain priority agricultural land for agricultural purposes; and*
 - ii. limit the introduction of sensitive land uses which may compromise existing, future and potential agricultural production.*
 - b. Define 'Priority Agriculture' zone under Schedule 2, Part 1, Clause 1 to align with the definition provided in State Planning Policy 2.5 - Rural planning.*

2. *Review the areas which have been identified by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development as high quality agricultural land and expand the extent of mapping to address the whole of Western Australia.*
3. *Undertake a 'health check' of State Planning Policy 2.5 - Rural planning and Development Control Policy 3.4 - Subdivision of rural land, in consultation with relevant stakeholders.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting resolution and subsequent resolution by the Great Eastern Country Zone have requested *that WALGA establish and promote policies to protect and prioritise the preservation of agricultural land against its displacement by non-agricultural activities that lead to a net reduction of the State's productive agricultural land.*
- WALGA prepared a *Research Paper: Protection of Productive Agricultural Land* that provides policy context, previous WALGA advocacy and analysis of State and Local Government approaches to agricultural land use protections.
- This work identified that a lack of consistency between the sub-regional planning strategies across the different regions of WA has impeded the implementation of best practice planning controls into local planning frameworks, and thus inconsistent application across the State.
- This advocacy position recommends statutory protections of areas that have been identified as high quality agricultural land, through amending the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015* to include a model zone for 'Priority Agriculture'. This will provide the ability for Local Governments to adopt the model zone into their local planning schemes.
- A joint meeting of the Environment Policy Team and Infrastructure Policy Team endorsed the position for consideration by State Council on 10 July 2024.
- This draft advocacy position should be considered in conjunction with accompanying draft WALGA advocacy positions Energy Transition Engagement and Community Benefit Framework (Item 8.2) and Renewable Energy Facilities (Item 8.3).

8.5 PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND REFORM ADVOCACY POSITION

By Coralie Claudio, Senior Policy Advisor Planning

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Retire Advocacy Position 6.2 Planning Reform; and
2. Replace Advocacy Position 6.1 Planning Principles with the following:

6.1 Planning Principles and Reform

1. *The Local Government sector supports an efficient and effective planning system guided by legislation, policy, and processes that:*
 - a. *facilitates the creation of sustainable and liveable communities and places;*

- b. *has a focus on strategic planning that delivers on long-term objectives and outcomes that balance social, environmental, cultural, and economic interests;*
 - c. *is easy to understand, accessible and transparent;*
 - d. *recognises the diversity of Western Australia and ensures that local environment, context, communities and character are appropriately reflected in planning frameworks and decision making;*
 - e. *ensures decisions are made by the level of government closest to and most impacted by a planning proposal; and*
 - f. *establishes consistent planning frameworks and streamlines planning processes where there is a demonstrated benefit in doing so.*
2. *Reforms to the planning system should:*
- a. *be guided by the above principles;*
 - b. *deliver community benefit;*
 - c. *promote system efficiency, including through the use of technology;*
 - d. *be evidence-based and informed by robust, transparent data;*
 - e. *proceed at an appropriate pace to enable effective implementation;*
 - f. *be informed by engagement with the community; and*
 - g. *be amended only with WALGA involvement and/or consultation/involvement with Local Government.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is proposed that the Advocacy Positions 6.1 Planning Principles and 6.2 Planning Reform be replaced with a new contemporary combined position that reflects the current planning system and planning reform agenda.
- The updated position identifies key elements that would create an effective and efficient planning system and how planning reform can be developed, prioritised, and implemented to achieve this.
- The updated position has been informed by feedback from Local Government officers, including WALGA's Planning Advisory Group and previous WALGA submissions on State Government planning reform initiatives.
- The Environment Policy Team endorsed the advocacy position at their meeting on 29 July.

8.6 PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP POLICY STATEMENT AND ADVOCACY POSITION

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

- WALGA RECOMMENDATION**
- That State Council:
1. Rescind the existing Extended Producer Responsibility Policy Statement and Advocacy Position 7.5 Extended Producer Responsibility.
 2. Endorse a new Product Stewardship Advocacy Position as follows:

1. *Industry should take responsibility (physical and/or financial) for the waste that it generates through the entire life cycle of the products it produces through the implementation of effective product stewardship. Without effective Product Stewardship, there will be increasing costs for the community, resource recovery targets will be difficult to reach and a transition to a circular economy is unlikely.*
2. *Effective Product Stewardship is characterised by:*
 - a. *Producers and importers taking responsibility for post consumption product impacts.*
 - b. *Schemes covering the entire cost of product recycling or recovery, including transport.*
 - c. *Leveraging existing Schemes and collection locations.*
 - d. *Being easy and convenient for the community to access.*
 - e. *Having equitable national coverage and access for all, including regional and remote locations.*
 - f. *Being evidence based.*
 - g. *Consistent regulation and implementation across Australia using national Product Stewardship legislation.*
 - h. *Timely action and industry cooperation during Scheme development and implementation.*
 - i. *Being demand based and aiming to recover the maximum amount of material, rather than being limited by targets.*
 - j. *No additional cost to consumers when the product is disposed of post consumption.*
3. *Local Government calls on the Commonwealth Government to implement effective Product Stewardship schemes for all products that drive environmentally and socially sustainable outcomes through the design, manufacture and distribution of products that can be more easily reused, repaired, recovered or recycled.*
4. *If national action is not progressed within a reasonable timeframe, or in a way that meets the needs of the Western Australian community, then Local Government supports a State based approach to Product Stewardship.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\) Policy Statement](#) was first endorsed in 2004 and reviewed and amended in 2008.
- The Statement outlines the rationale for Local Government support for EPR, as a way of ensuring producers take responsibility for their products at the end of life, and some of the key elements of successful Schemes.
- WALGA's [Local Government Principles for Product Stewardship](#) was endorsed in 2022. The Principles provided more detail on key design elements for Schemes and have been used to inform advocacy.
- Following discussion at the April Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) and Officers Advisory Group meetings it was agreed to review the EPR Policy Statement and incorporate the Local Government Principles into a new Product Stewardship Policy Statement and Advocacy Position.

- The Product Stewardship Policy Statement and Advocacy Position has been updated to:
 - Include a greater focus on the potential for Product Stewardship to influence the design of products, as well as their post consumption disposal.
 - Identifying the increasing cost burden on Local Government and the community of increasing complex products.
 - Focus on ensuring all products have a clear and funded end of life pathway.
- The MWAC endorsed the new Policy Statement and Advocacy Position in June.

8.7 SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT STATE WASTE STRATEGY

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council endorse the Draft State Waste Strategy Submission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Draft State Waste Strategy](#) (Draft Strategy) and [State Waste Infrastructure Plan](#) were released on 29 May. This follows the release of the [Strategy Directions Paper](#) in May 2023. WALGA provided a comprehensive [Submission](#) on the Directions Paper.
- Given the significant impact of the Strategy on Local Government, WALGA was granted an extension to the deadline to allow the draft submission to be considered by WALGA Zones and State Council.
- The focus of the Draft Strategy is:
 - Better outcomes for regional and Aboriginal communities
 - Increasing our focus on waste avoidance
 - Better management of priority materials
 - Realising the economic potential of recycling
 - Contingency planning and climate resilience.
- New Targets are also proposed for each of the Avoid, Recover and Protect areas.
- WALGA's draft submission on the Draft Strategy was informed by Local Government written feedback and feedback received at a webinar held on 19 July.
- This Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) endorsed the draft submission on 31 July 2024.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Trayning
Seconded: Shire of Kellerberrin

That the Zone supports all WALGA recommendations in the Matters for Decision as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda and as listed above.

CARRIED

11.3.2. Policy Team and Committee Reports

9.1 ENVIRONMENT POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Environment Policy Team to the 4 September 2024 meeting.

9.2 GOVERNANCE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Governance Policy Team meeting for the 4 September 2024 meeting.

9.3 INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Ian Duncan, Executive Manager, Infrastructure

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Note the report from the Infrastructure Policy Team to the 4 September 2024 meeting.
2. Determine to retire the following Advocacy Positions:
 - a. 5.2.4 Seat Belt Legislation
 - b. 5.8 Ports
 - c. 5.12 Infrastructure WA

9.4 PEOPLE AND PLACE POLICY TEAM REPORT

By Nicole Matthews, Executive Manager Policy

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council:

1. Note the report from the People and Place Policy Team to the 4 September 2024 meeting.
2. Determine to:
 - a. retain the following Advocacy Positions with amendment:
 - i. 3.2.1 Local Public Health Plans
 - b. rescind the following Advocacy Position:
 - i. 3.5 Crime Prevention

9.5 MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL (MWAC) REPORT

By Rebecca Brown, Policy Manager, Environment and Waste

WALGA RECOMMENDATION

That State Council note the report from the Municipal Waste Advisory Council to the 4 September 2024 meeting.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Nungarin
Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

That the Zone:

1. notes all Policy Team and Committee Reports as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda; and
2. supports the WALGA recommendations in the Infrastructure and People and Place Policy Team Reports as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda and as listed above.

CARRIED

11.3.3. Matters for Noting/Information

- 10.1 Local Government Legislative Reform
- 10.2 Report on Local Government Road Assets and Expenditure 2022/23

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Wyalkatchem
Seconded: Shire of Tammin

That the Zone notes all Matters for Noting/Information as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda.

CARRIED

11.3.4. Key Activity Reports

- 11.1.1 Report on Key Activities, Advocacy Portfolio
- 11.1.2 Report on Key Activities, Infrastructure Portfolio
- 11.1.3 Report on Key Activities, Member Services Portfolio
- 11.1.4 Report on Key Activities, Policy Portfolio

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Narembeen
Seconded: Shire of Wyalkatchem

That the Zone notes all Key Activity Reports as contained in the September 2024 State Council Agenda.

CARRIED

11.4. WALGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The WALGA President's Report was provided as an attachment to the Agenda.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Shire of Tammin
Seconded: Shire of Nungarin

That the WALGA President's Report be received.

CARRIED

12. EMERGING ISSUES

The Shire of Mukinbudin requested WALGA provide a report to the Zone on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting, through the Executive Committee.

13. NEXT MEETING

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 5 November 2024 commencing at 8:00am, via MSTeams.

The next Great Eastern Country Zone meeting will be held on Thursday, 14 November commencing at 9:30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Merredin.

14. CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 12:20pm.