



# Shire of Lake Grace

20 December 2023

## Ordinary Council Meeting

### INFORMATION BULLETIN

### ITEM 16.0 - ATTACHMENTS

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Information Bulletin  
**Infrastructure Services Report**

Shire of Lake Grace

Prepared for the December 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting  
presenting information to the end of November 2023

## Road Maintenance Grading

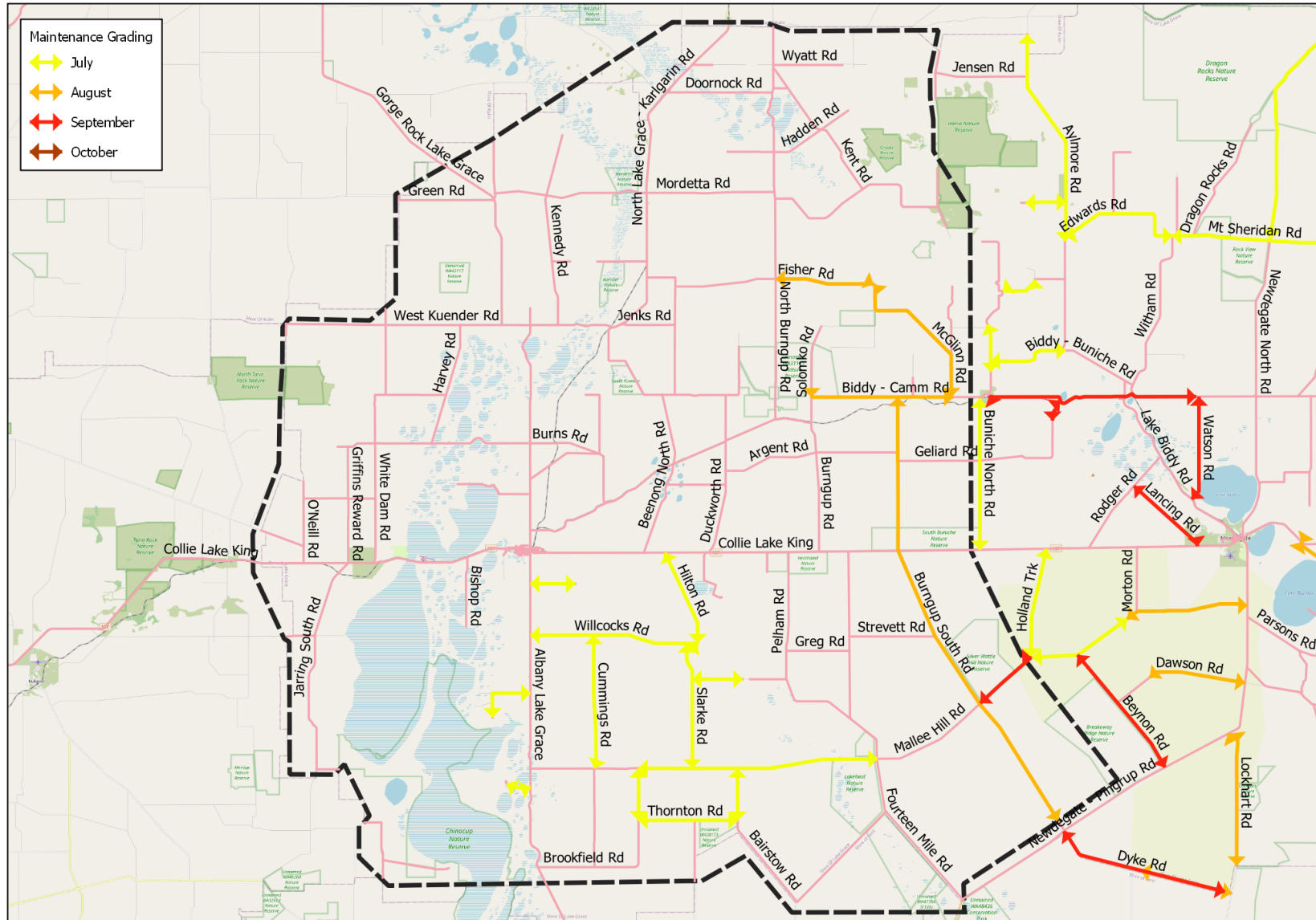
For the month of November 2023

<i>Lake Grace Area</i>		<i>Newdegate Area</i>		<i>Lake King-Varley Area</i>	
<i>Road Name</i>	<i>Graded (km)</i>	<i>Road Name</i>	<i>Graded (km)</i>	<i>Road Name</i>	<i>Graded (km)</i>
<i>No grading done</i>		Biddy Camm Rd	13.40	Biddy Camm Rd	18.61
		Haig Rd	5.00	Broombush Flat Rd	10.07
		Magenta Rd	6.66	Fitzgerald Rd	9.76
		Mount Sheridan Rd	23.34	Hatters Hill Rd	14.86
		Mount Vernon Rd	42.14	Hewsons Rd	12.66
		Newdegate North Rd	5.23	Long Creek Rd	10.89
		Oakey Rd	9.32	Magdhaba Tr	5.60
		Old Ravensthorpe Rd	23.86	Mallee Tree Rd	9.33
		Taylor Rd	11.00	Milstead Rd	6.23
		Witham Rd	2.00	Muncasters Rd	13.85
				Old Newdegate Rd	7.87
				Pickernell Rd	13.20
				Purnta Rd	5.94
<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>	<b><u>0.00</u></b>	<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>	<b><u>141.95</u></b>	<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>	<b><u>138.87</u></b>

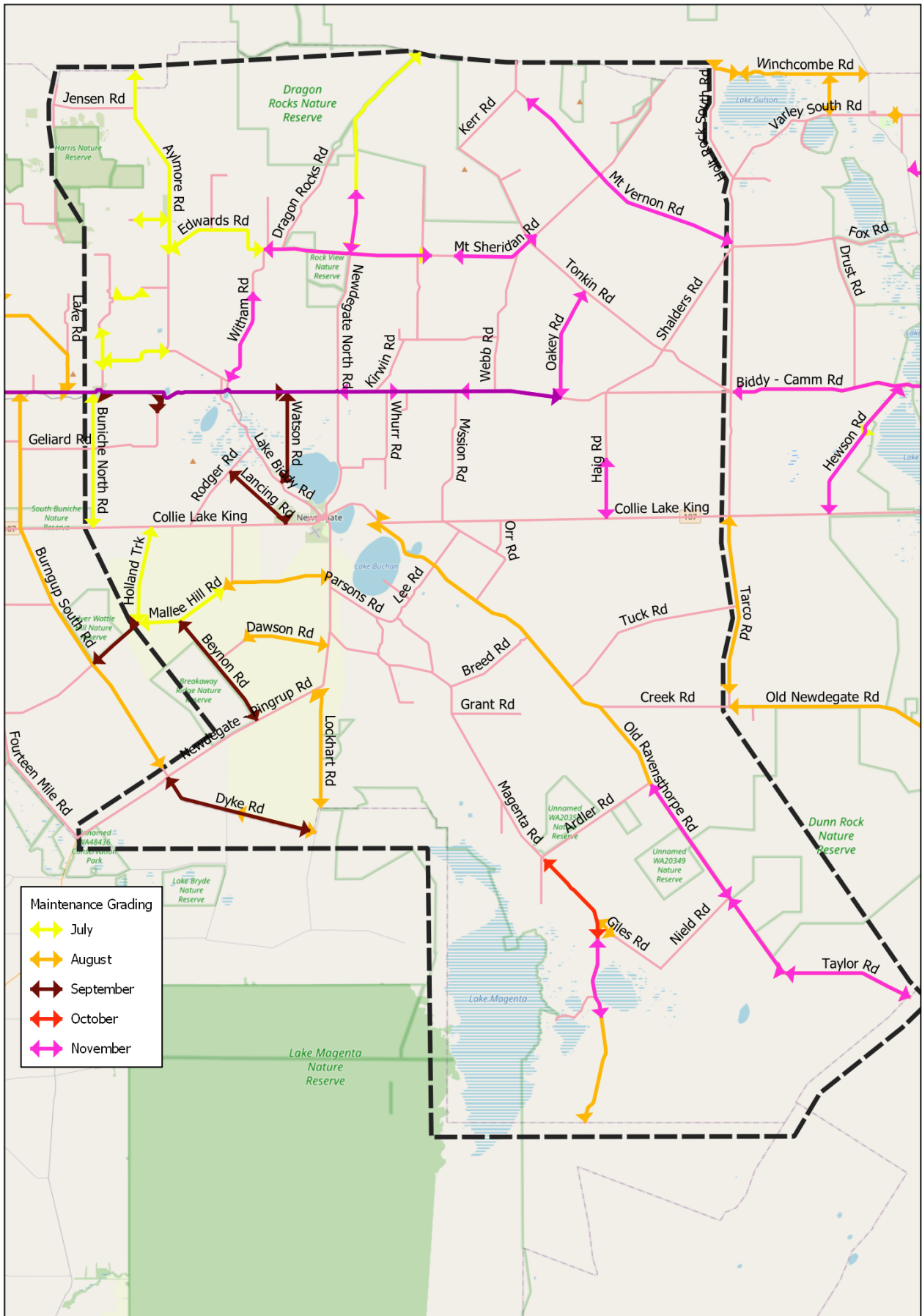
### 2023/24 Year-To-Date Grading by Month

<b>Year</b>	<b>Month</b>	<i>Lake Grace Area (km)</i>	<i>Newdegate Area (km)</i>	<i>Lake King-Varley Area (km)</i>	<b>Monthly Subtotal</b>
2023	July	84.53	107.79	135.03	327.35
	August	63.62	108.21	145.95	317.78
	September	0.00	60.26	114.16	174.42
	October	0.00	8.17	144.91	153.08
	November	0.00	141.95	138.87	280.82
	December				
2024	January				
	February				
	March				
	April				
	May				
	June				
	<b>To-Date</b>	<u>148.15</u>	<u>426.38</u>	<u>678.92</u>	<u>1,253.45</u>

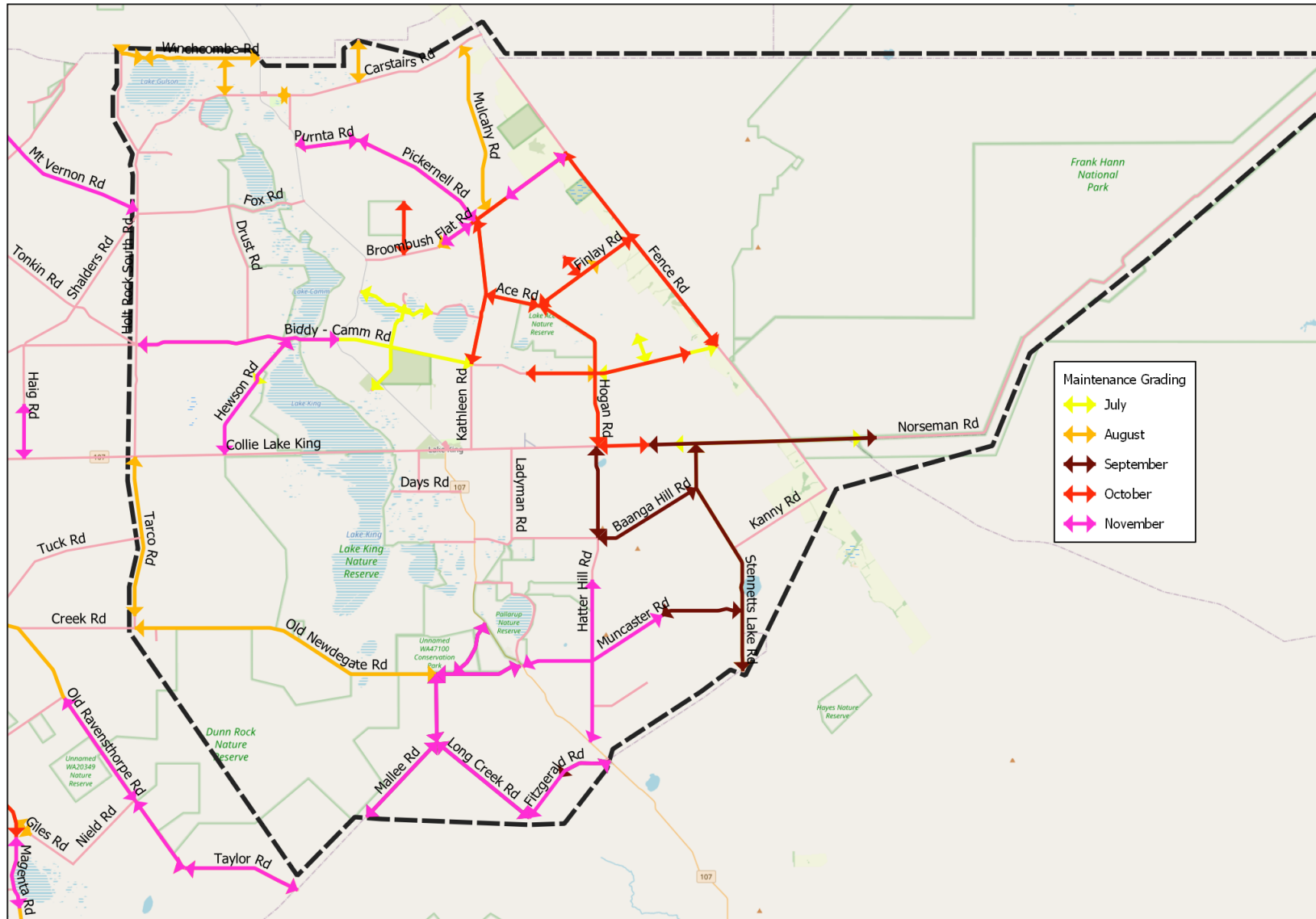




Monthly maintenance grading – Lake Grace area



Monthly maintenance grading – Newdegate area



Monthly maintenance grading – Lake King-Varley area

## Plant Maintenance

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### Plant Repairs

Plant	Plant Description	Action
PCB02	2008 Mitsubishi Fuso Rosa Bus	Replace windscreen, 150,000 km service.
PGRA07	2015 John Deere 770G Grader	Replacement tyre.
PGRA08	2020 Cat 140 Motor Grader	500 hour service.
PLM07	2022 Kawasaki Mower	Tyre repair.
PLVU52	2021 Ford Ranger Dual Cab	75,000 km service.
PTCK22	2021 Hino Tip Truck	30,000 km service, replace all tyres.
PTCK24	2021 Isuzu Crew Cab	20,000 km service.

## Building Construction & Maintenance

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### Construction

- Assisting in Lake Grace All-Abilities Playground construction.

### Maintenance

#### Lake Grace

- 10a Gumtree Drive.
- 10b Gumtree Drive.
- 14 Blackbutt Way.
- 33a Absolon Street.
- 65b Bennett Street.
- Lakes Village Hall.
- Medical Centre.
- Railway Station Toilets.
- Shire Depot.
- Sports Pavilion.
- Swimming Pool.
- Uniting Church.
- Visitor Centre.

#### Newdegate

- Golf & Bowls Club.
- Hainesworth Building.

- Playgrounds.
- Swimming Pool.

### **Lake King**

- Nil.

### **Varley**

- Nil.

### **Other**

- Nil.

## **Parks & Gardens Maintenance**

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### Lake Grace

- General maintenance, gardening/mowing & tidying of gardens and parks.
- Pruning vegetation at sewerage ponds.
- Tidying up of 6 Banksia Place.

### Newdegate

- General maintenance, gardening/mowing of the recreation grounds, parks and skate park.

### Lake King

- Carried out general gardening, mowing and spraying to all parks and gardens.
- Gardening to Library gardens.

### Varley

- Carried out gardening maintenance and general maintenance, including spraying, mowing, raking of the town site, sports complex and cemetery for weeds.

### Pingaring

- Nil.

## Customer Service Requests

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For the period of 1 July 2023 to 30 November 2023:

Category	Complete	Incomplete	Total	% Complete
Works	7	1	8	87.5%
Building	2	1	3	66.7%
Parks & Gardens	3	0	3	100.0%
<i>Total</i>	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>85.7%</u>

# Central Country Zone

## MINUTES

Friday, 17 November 2023

Commenced at 9:30am

### Venue

**Shire of Lake Grace  
Lake Grace Sports Pavilion.  
Corner of Bishop and Bennett Street,  
Lake Grace**

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## 1 Opening and Welcome

The Chair declared the meeting open at 9:30am.

### 1.1 **Welcome:**

The Zone Chair welcomed Zone members and provided OSH/bathroom/exit information to those in attendance.

### 1.2 **Share your name and Local Government:**

Delegates were reminded to ensure that they call their name and Local Government when taking the floor to allow for accurate Minutes to be recorded.

The first item of the meeting was the conduct of elections.

## 2 Elections

Pursuant to the WALGA Constitution, the Secretariat assumed the Chair for conducting the election of office bearers.

Guidelines for elections were distributed to Member Councils via email dated 19 October 2023.

Nominations were submitted preferably by Wednesday, 8 November. However, nominations could still be submitted prior to the commencement of the Zone meeting and from the floor.

<h3>2.1 <b>Elections of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Central Country Zone</b></h3>
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The election for the Chair and Deputy Chair was conducted. The term is two years expiring in November 2025, in line with the terms of State Council representatives and in sync with Local Government Elections.

#### Zone Chairperson:

The following nomination was received for the position of Chair for 2 years, November 2023 to November 2025.

- Des Hickey                      Shire of Corrigin

No further nominations were received.

## **DECLARATION**

**That Cr Des Hickey be elected as Chairperson of the of the Central Country Zone for the term of 2 years, November 2023 to November 2025.**



Deputy Zone Chairperson:

No written nominations were received for the position of Deputy Chair.

Nominations were received from the floor:

- President Cr Leigh Ballard                      Shire of Narrogin

**DECLARATION**

**That President Leigh Ballard be elected as Deputy Chairperson of the Central Country Zone for the term of 2 year, November 2023 to November 2025.**

**2.2 Elections of State Council Representatives and Deputy State Council Representatives to the Central Country Zone**

WALGA incorporates a 24 member State Council with its members derived from Metropolitan and Country Zones. The State Council is chaired by the Association President.

In accordance with sub-clause 9(3) of the WALGA Constitution representatives and deputy representatives to the State Council shall be elected by Zones of the Metropolitan and Country constituencies for two (2) year terms, commencing from the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2023 and concluding at the Ordinary Meeting of State Council two years later.

For the Central Country Zone, there is one (1) representative position on State Council and one (1) deputy representative position. The term is from the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2023 and concluding at the Ordinary Meeting of State Council in December 2025.

State Councillor:

The following written nominations were received for the position of State Council Representative:

- President Leigh Ballard                      Shire of Narrogin
- Cr Phillip Blight                                Shire of Wagin

No further nominations were received from the floor.

In accordance with the guidelines endorsed by State Council, candidates were afforded the opportunity to make a 2 minute election bid prior to the secret ballot being taken.

**DECLARATION**

**That Cr Phil Blight be elected as State Council Representative of the Central Country Zone to the State Council for the term of 2 years, December 2023 to December 2025.**



Deputy State Councillor:

No written nominations were received for the position of Deputy State Council Representative.

One nomination was received from the floor:

- President Leigh Ballard      Shire of Narrogin

**DECLARATION**

**That President Leigh Ballard be elected as Deputy State Council Representative of the Central Country Zone to the State Council for the term of 2 years, December 2023 to December 2025.**

We ask the elected delegates to note the following details:

WALGA will host a State Councillor Induction Session on Thursday, 30 November. Further information will be e-mailed shortly.

**2.3 Election of up to three (3) Zone Executive Committee Members of the Central Country Zone**

Automatic Executive Committee membership will include the Zone President, Deputy Zone President and the State Councillor Representative.

The election for the Zone Executive Committee representatives was conducted. The term is two years expiring in November 2025, in line with the terms of Zone Delegates and in sync with Local Government Elections.

Nominations for up to three Zone Executive Committee Representatives were taken from the floor.

Should a ballot be required, nominees will be afforded the opportunity to provide a two (2) minute election bid.

Each voting delegate will be entitled to cast one (1) vote in the ballot process. The candidates with the greater number of votes will be elected.

Nominations were received from the floor:

- Cr Katrina Crute      Shire of Brookton
- Cr Julie Russel      Shire of Wickelpin
- Cr Karen Harrington      Shire of West Arthur

**DECLARATION**

**That Cr Katrina Crute, Cr Julie Russel and Cr Karen Harrington, be elected as Zone Executive Committee representative for the term of 2 years, November 2023 to November 2025.**

**2.4 Election of Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee of the Central Country Zone – 1 Delegate and 1 Deputy Delegate**

The election for the Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee of the Central Country Zone was conducted.

### Delegate

Nominations for the Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee were taken from the floor.

Should a ballot be required, nominees will be afforded the opportunity to provide a two (2) minute election bid.

Each voting delegate will be entitled to cast one (1) vote in the ballot process. The candidate with the greater number of votes will be elected.

One nomination was received from the floor:

- Jackie McBurney Shire of Pingelly

### **DECLARATION**

**That Cr Jackie McBurney be elected as the Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee Delegate of the Central Country Zone.**

### Deputy Delegate

Nominations for the Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee Deputy Delegate will be taken from the floor.

Should a ballot be required, nominees will be afforded the opportunity to provide a two (2) minute election bid.

Each voting delegate will be entitled to cast one (1) vote in the ballot process. The candidate with the greater number of votes will be elected.

One nomination was received from the floor:

- Cr Karen Harrington Shire of West Arthur

### **DECLARATION**

**That Cr Karen Harrington be elected as Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee Deputy Delegate of the Central Country Zone**

*Cr Des Hickey assumed the role as Chair.*

*Cr Hickey congratulated all those recently elected and thanked delegates for their contribution to the Zone.*

### **3. Host Council Presentation**

Cr Len Armstrong, President from the Shire of Lake Grace extended a welcome to delegates and guests and provided a presentation on the Shire.  
The presentation is attached – **Attachment 1**

#### 4. Attendance and Apologies

##### Attendance

<b>Shire of Beverley</b>	President Cr David White Mr Stephen Gollan, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Brookton</b>	President Cr Katrina Crute Cr Charlene Hayden Mr Gary Sherry, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Corrigin</b>	President Cr Des Hickey Deputy President Cr Sharon Jacobs Ms Natalie Manton, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Cuballing</b>	Deputy President Cr Rob Harris Cr Adrian Kowald Mr Stan Scott, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Dumbleyung</b>	President Cr Amy Knight Mr Gavin Treasure Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Kulin</b>	President Cr Grant Robins Mr Alan Leeson Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Lake Grace</b>	President Cr Len Armstrong Deputy President Stephen Hunt Mr Alan George Chief Executive Officer, non-voting Craig Elefsen, Manager Infrastructure Services - observer
<b>Shire of Narrogin</b>	President Leigh Ballard (Chair) Cr Clive Bartron Mr Dale Stewart Chief Executive Officer, non-voting Cr Josh Pomykala - observer
<b>Shire of Pingelly</b>	President Cr Jackie McBurney Deputy President Cr Peter Wood
<b>Shire of Quairading</b>	President Cr Jo Haythornthwaite Deputy President Cr Trevor Stacey
<b>Shire of Wagin</b>	President Cr Phillip Blight Cr Geoff West - observer Mr Mark Hook, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
<b>Shire of Wandering</b>	President Cr Ian Turton



Deputy President Sheryl Little  
Mr Alan Hart Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

**Shire of West Arthur**

President Cr Neil Morrell  
Deputy President Cr Karen Harrington  
Mr Rajinder S Sunner, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

**Shire of Wickepin**

President Cr Julie Russell  
Mr Tim Clynych, A/Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

**Guests**

Wheatbelt Development Commission	Susan Hall, Chief Executive Officer
Main Roads WA	Brad Pearce, Operations Manager
Water Corporation	Michael Roberts, Regional Manager Goldfields & Agricultural Region
Regional Development Australia WA	Mandy Walker, Director Regional Development

**Members of Parliament**

Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for Agricultural Region

**WALGA**

Tony Brown, Executive Director Member Services  
Kathy Robertson, Manager Association and Corporate Governance

**Apologies**

Shire of Beverley	Deputy President Cr Dee Ridgway
Shire of Cuballing	President Cr Eliza Dowling
Shire of Dumbleyung	Deputy President Cr Grant Lukins
Shire of Kulin	Cr Robbie Bowey
Shire of Pingelly	Mr Andrew Dover, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Quairading	Ms Natalie Ness, Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Wagin	Deputy President Bryan Kilpatrick
Shire of West Arthur	Mr Vin Fordham Lamont, Chief Executive Officer, non-voting
Shire of Wickepin	Mr Nathan Cain, Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Williams	Cr Jarrad Logie
	Mr Geoff McKeown Chief Executive Officer, non-voting

**Members of Parliament**

Hon Steve Martin MLC, Member for the Agricultural Region  
Hon Colin de Grussa MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Hon Martin Aldridge MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Hon Mia Davies MLA, Member for Central Wheatbelt  
Hon Peter Rundle MLA, Member for Roe  
Hon Darren West MLC, Member for Agricultural Region  
Hon Sandra Carr MLC, Member for Agricultural Region

**Main Roads WA**

Fred Steer, Operations Manager

Wheatbelt Development Commission	Renee Manning, Principal Regional Development Officer - Central East
DLGSC	Samantha Cornthwaite, Regional Manager Wheatbelt
WALGA	Rodney Thornton, Regional Road Safety Advisor

### Attachments to Agenda

The following are provided as attachments to the minutes:

1. Item 3 Host Council Presentation
2. Item 9.3 Wheatbelt Development Commission report
3. Item 9.4 Main Roads report
4. Item 11.1 Red Tape Reduction Registrar
5. Item 13.4.1 State Council Agenda - [Agenda](#)

### 5. Declarations of Interest

Nil

### 6. Announcements

Nil

### 7. Guest Speakers / Deputations

#### 7.1 WA Country Health Service - Wheatbelt

Nancy Bineham, Director Strategy, Change & Service Development was an apology for this meeting. Nancy was invited to present on *Planning for Health and Hospital Services in the Wheatbelt* as well as *staff attraction and retention strategies including housing, incentives and contracts for permanent staff*. Nancy hopes to attend the February meeting.

**Noted**

### 8. Members of Parliament

Members of Federal and State Government, representing the Zone Member Local Government Districts, were invited to provide a brief update on matters relevant to the Zone Members.

#### Hon Shelley Payne MLC, Member for Agricultural Region

- Firearms
  - Consultation process now closed
  - Petition to extend consultation period
  - Consultation paper available on the internet, outlining everything planned for the new Bill
- School bus review
  - New improvements for school bus eligibility for rural students
  - Improves choices for kids in terms of which school to attend / flexibility
- Infrastructure program



- Federal review, changes to funding
- May affect Great Southern road network
- Energy relief for eligible small businesses
  - Applications needed by end of the month
  - \$650 rebate
- Accepting EOI from community housing providers for social housing
  - Looking into whether keystart grants can be extended to community housing groups
  - Have made announcements recently re short term accommodation – incentive of \$10k to return these to the rental market
- ACH Act
  - Repeals have gone through
  - Some changes made to original Act
- South Coast marine park
  - Draft plans in mid December, then opening up for comment

## 9. Agency Reports

### 9.1 Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries (DLGSC)

Samantha Cornthwaite, Regional Manager Wheatbelt was an apology. A report was provided.

**Noted**

### 9.2 Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt (RDAW)

Mandy Walker, Director Regional Development provided a report.

*Mandy announced that this will be her last Zone meeting as she will be stepping back from her role at RDAW. Mandy introduced the new Director Regional Development, Josh Pomykala.*

Cr Katrina Crute – moved to thank Mandy on behalf of the Zone.

**Noted**

### 9.3 Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC)

Susan Hall, (Acting) Chief Executive Officer, provided an update. The Wheatbelt Development Commission report is now attached (**Attachment 2**)

**Noted**

### 9.4 Main Roads Western Australia

Brad Pearce, Operations Manager Narrogin, provided an update to the Zone, **Attachment 3** to the Minutes.

*Brad announced that this will be his last Zone meeting as he will be stepping away from his role at Main Roads. Fred Steer will take up the role of Operations Manager Narrogin going forward.*

*Zone Chair, Cr Des Hickey thanked Brad for his reports and contributions to the Zone.*

**Noted**

## 10. Minutes

### 10.1 Confirmation of Minutes from the Central Country Zone meeting held on Friday, 25 August 2023

The Minutes of the Central Country Zone meeting held on Friday, 25 August 2023 have previously been circulated to Member Councils.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Moved: Cr Katrina Crute  
Seconded: Cr Jackie McBurney

That the Minutes of the Central Country Zone meeting held on Friday, 25 August 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

**CARRIED**

### 10.2 Business Arising from the Minutes from the Central Country Zone Meeting held on Friday, 25 August 2023

#### 10.2.1 (Item 8.2.1) Waste Management Funding

The Minister for the Environment has advised that the State Government will consult later this year with businesses and the community on a proposal to expand the waste levy boundary into regional areas.

The Ministers Office has agreed to a meeting with the Zone's deputation during this consultation window - Cr Leigh Ballard, Cr Des Hickey, Cr Phil Blight, and Rebecca Brown, Manager Waste and Environment, WALGA. We are awaiting suggested dates for the meeting and will update the Committee at the earliest.

**Noted**

#### 10.2.2 (Item 9.2) Non-Standard Water Services

*By the Shire of Dumbleyung*

##### **Background:**

Water Corporation recently contacted the Shire of Dumbleyung to advise of its intentions to notify impacted residents of its decision to cease providing standard water services to the Moulyinning township.

The Shire is aware that this decision will impact on all people and properties (residences) located in the Moulyinning townsite, including CBH and the Moulyinning Hall.

The impact of this decision means that whilst supply may continue, Water Corp will no longer guarantee volume (pressure), frequency and quality of that supply.

As a transitional measure, Water Corp has offered to fund the cost and installation of alternative on-site treatment measures i.e. water tanks, etc. But the end user then bears the cost and responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and eventual replacement of the same.

The Shire of Dumbleyung has a number of concerns in relation to this Water Corp decision, namely:

1. The Shire (and residents) being asked to take on responsibility for provision of potable drinking water that was previously the responsibility of Water Corp
2. The public health and risk implications to the Shire (and residents) in relation to 1 above
3. The ongoing cost implications to the Shire (and residents) in relation to 1 above

To summarise, Water Corp is asking the Shire of Dumbleyung (and residents) to take on responsibility for something that has been previously the responsibility of (and instigated by) Water Corp.

Despite Water Corp's offer to provide funds to implement agreed alternative treatment solutions, the ongoing water quality, operations and maintenance/replacement cost risks is assumed by the Shire of Dumbleyung (and residents).

It is the Shire of Dumbleyung's position that any change to water provision arrangements should remain the responsibility of Water Corp, despite the change in servicing standards.

The Shire has raised this matter for consideration at the most recent WALGA Central Country Zone meeting held in Kulin. The Zone unanimously endorsed the following resolution:

*'That the Central Country Zone:*

1. *Rejects Water Corporation attempts to classify regional sites as a 'Non-Standard Water Service' (unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority);*
2. *Formally writes to Water Corporation and the Minister for Water confirming this position;*
3. *Requests that WALGA supports the position of the Central Country Zone and rejects the Water Corporation's attempts to classify regional sites as a 'Non-Standard Water Service'; and*
4. *Requests WALGA to engage with the Minister for Water to retain the current services unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority'.*

Further the Hon Steve Martin, MLC has written to the Minister for Water seeking clarification in relation to this matter and Shire representatives were present at a recent Rural Water Council of WA Meeting in which the Minister for Water attended (and was engaged). A copy of Steve's letter to the Minister and the Minister's response is attached. The Shire since clarified what was meant by the Minister's response '*... there will be no change to the drinking water supplied to the nine identified properties within the Shire...*'. Water Corp's response was that '*I believe the intention of the Minister's words was to point out that the water being supplied to these properties is not changing, which aligns with Water Corporation's communications*'. Difficult to try and reconcile '*not changing*' with Water Corp's clear intent to diminish (walk away) from their provision of service responsibilities (particularly water quality).

Thus far, all Shire attempts to seek a reversal to this Water Corp decision have been rejected. In the Shire's most recent (email) contact with Water Corp, the following Shire advice was provided:

- *'Moulyinning is a township, not an isolated site. The Moulyinning community was originally established with the expectation and understanding of normal power and water services in support. The recent Water Corp advice that this service is now to be classified as 'non-standard', conflicts with the basic premise on why these townships were originally established; and now threatens its future existence. Who's going to buy and invest (& potentially grow) these small towns, if basic services are changed or withdrawn?'*

- *A potential solution to the (water quality) problem would be for Water Corp to invest and install in a new Chlorinator to service Moulyinning township. Why hasn't this option been considered?*
- *The proposed Water Corp NSW solution has unfair and unreasonable cost and risk implications to all Moulyinning residents, including local government (as previously advised).*
- *Water Corp continue to state that the issue is one of discovery and communications oversight. Communications is the form being used to convey Water Corp notice and messaging, not the cause. The real cause is lack of Water Corp water quality servicing to its customers to meet statutory licensing requirements. And Water Corp intent is to 'wash its hands' of the subject matter by walking away from meeting minimum performance requirements.*
- *To be clear, it is Water Corp that created this problem and needs to be accountable to step up and resolve this matter to the satisfaction of its customers.*
- *The Shire of Dumbleyung again asks that Water Corp identifies and implements an alternate solution which provides a standard water service to all Moulyinning residents'.*

The Shire of Dumbleyung will continue to pursue this important matter until a satisfactory provision of standard water services outcome for our Moulyinning township community is achieved. Any WALGA State support and assistance in relation to this matter would be appreciated.

The Executive Officer wrote to the Department of Water and received a reply - Attachment 4 of the Agenda.

In addition to the Zone writing to the Department of Water, Hon Steve Martin MLC wrote on behalf of the Shire of Dumbleyung and received a reply - Attachment 5 of the Agenda.

The Executive Officer advised that he will follow up with WALGA staff on this matter.

#### **Noted**

### **10.3 Minutes of the Central Country Executive Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 8 November 2023**

The recommendations from the Executive Committee Meeting that require Zone consideration have been extracted for the Zones consideration.

#### **10.3.1 (Item 4.2.1) State Government Changes to Gun Laws**

##### **Background:**

The Executive Officer wrote to the Hon. Paul Papalia CSC MLA Minister for Police; Road Safety; Defence Industry; Veterans Issues in May of 2023. The Minister was invited to the June meeting to speak to;

*'... further outline how the proposed changes to the way firearms legislation is to be implemented, as well as the defined process that led to these proposed changes.'*

The Ministers office was unable to accept the invitation however did state they would supply a written response to the Zone. The Executive Officer is still following up on this response and will include in the next Agenda.

#### Action

*The Zone Executive Officer will contact the Police and Ministers Office to see if we can get a response on this matter. The Executive Officer has made contact with the Ministers Office a number of times, most recently again on 26 October 2023. We are still awaiting a response.*

Committee Discussion:

The Committee agreed this is still a matter of importance for Member communities.

**Noted**

**10.3.2 (Item 5.3) Audited Financial Statements to 30 June 2023**

By Nilpa Shah-Smith, Finance Manager, WALGA

**BACKGROUND**

The auditors have completed their audit fieldwork and reporting and have sent through the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023.

In addition to the signed 2022/2023 financials the signed audit report and signed management letter were attached to the agenda.

The Executive committee provide the following recommendation:

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved: President Cr Leigh Ballard**  
**Seconded: Deputy President Cr Karen Harrington**

**That the Zone endorse the audited annual financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023.**  
**CARRIED**

**10.3.3 (Item 5.6) Proposed 2024 meeting dates**

**Background:**

The below schedule of meeting dates was presented to the Committee for discussion. The Committee agreed to take this item to the Zone for discussion in order to select the most accommodating dates for the Members.

Zones dates are scheduled to coincide with the WALGA State Council meetings, the window for Zone dates for 2024 are listed as an additional column below.

Should alternate dates be agreed for the Zone, the Executive Dates will compliment the schedule.

**ZONE**

<b>Proposed Zone Meeting Dates 2024</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Host Council</b>	<b>Window for Zone meetings to occur</b>	<b>State Council meeting Dates 2024</b>
<b>Friday 16 February</b>	Friday 9.30 am	Narrogin	Thursday 15 – Monday 26 February	Wednesday 6 March
<b>Friday 12 April</b>	Friday 9.30 am	Pingelly	Thursday 11 – Monday 22 April	Wednesday 1 May
<b>Friday 14 June</b>	Friday 9.30 am	Quairading	Thursday 13 – Monday 24 June	Wednesday 3 July
<b>Friday 16 August</b>	Friday 9.30 am	Wagin	Thursday 15 – Monday 26 August	Regional Meeting 5-6 September
<b>Friday 15 November</b>	Friday 9.30 am	Wandering	Thursday 14 – Monday 25 November	Wednesday 4 December

This table below states the Ordinary Council meeting schedule for each Member Council to assist in the discussion.

<b>Member Council</b>	<b>Ordinary Council meeting schedule</b>
Shire of Corrigin	Third Tuesday of the month
Shire of Cuballing	Third Wednesday of the month
Shire of Kulin	Third Wednesday of the month
Shire of Pingelly	Third Wednesday of the month
Shire of Wickepin	Third Wednesday of the month
Shire of Williams	Third Wednesday of the month
Shire of Brookton	Third Thursday of the month
Shire of Dumbleyung	Third Thursday of the month
Shire of Wandering	Third Thursday of the month
Shire of West Arthur	Third Thursday of the month
Shire of Beverley	Fourth Tuesday of the month
Shire of Wagin	Fourth Tuesday of the month
Shire of Lake Grace	Fourth Wednesday of the month
Shire of Narrogin	Fourth Wednesday of the month
Shire of Quairading	Last Thursday of the Month

Moved: President Cr Julie Russell  
 Seconded: President Cr Katrina Crute

That the Zone meeting dates listed in the table be endorsed.

**CARRIED**

#### **10.3.4 (Item 5.10) Minister for Local Government**

The Executive Officer wrote to the Minister for Local Government, Hon David Michael, who has confirmed his attendance at the April 2024 Zone meeting.

**Noted**

#### **10.4 Minutes of the Central Country Executive Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 8 November 2023**

The Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 8 November 2023 were attached to the Agenda.

The remainder of the items are for the Zones consideration.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Moved: President Cr Katrina Crute  
 Seconded: President Cr Phil Blight

That the Minutes of the Central Country Zone Executive Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 8 November 2023 be noted, and the items not considered above be endorsed.

**CARRIED**

### **11. Zone Business**

#### **11.1 Red Tape Reduction Registrar**

##### **Background:**

As resolved at the June 2023 meeting, please find attached the *Red Tape Reduction* spreadsheet (**Attachment 4**).

This is a standing item on the Agenda. Members are invited to populate this live document with red tape issues relevant to your Local Government.

**Noted**

#### **11.2 Strategic Planning Workshop**

##### **Background:**

The Zone participated in a Strategic Planning workshop prior to the August Zone meeting. This meeting was attended by elected members with the support of their Chief Executive Officers. The outcomes of the session were attached for discussion.

At the meeting, the strategic planning session resolved to:

1. *Draft an item recording the results of today's discussion for inclusion in the November agenda; and*
2. *Discuss strategic priorities of the Zone at the February meeting.*



**Noted****11.3 Roadworks during Total Fire Bans**

The 'Road work during a Total Fire Ban, Proposed regulatory changes' presentation was received by WALGA from the Department of Fire and Emergency services on Friday, 27 October. This presentation, takes into consideration concerns raised by the Zone and brought to DFES's attention. Slides 13 through 15 outline the conditions and benefits of these proposed changes.

**Noted****11.4 2023 Resolution for changes to Electoral Process**

*By the Shire of Beverley*

**Background:**

With changes brought into the amended *Local Government Act* to make compulsory the use of an Optional Preferential system of voting through Postal Voting, the Shire of Beverley found the experience frustrating and costly:

1. It proved difficult to explain to the community;
2. It also mandated the engagement of the West Australian Electoral Commission at significant cost;
3. The staff member engaged as Returning Officer found the system confusing and somewhat burdensome;
4. The count on the night took two hours and then a wait of one and a half hours before the Commission indicated that the process was successfully completed; and,
5. The Commission did not declare the result until 10:00 am Sunday morning via email which the Returning Officer did not see until she attended the office at midday.

Shire of Beverley	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
WAEC quote	-				\$18,000.00
WAEC actual cost	-				Invoice not received
Vacancies	5	6	4	6	3
Candidates	6	10	6	6	4
Status of election (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Number of Electors	1,323	1,357	1,365	-	1,410
Votes received	167	392	249	-	669
Cost for in-house	\$1,961.96	\$2577.76	\$2,799.29	\$2,126.30	
Additional staff 2023					\$940.00
Cost per vote	\$11.75	\$6.58	\$11.24		\$28.31*
Cost per Elector	\$1.48	\$1.90	\$2.05		\$13.43*

\*Final cost awaiting invoice

Previous elections conducted by the Shire have always provided an opportunity for those community members interested, to attend the count on the Saturday night after which the Shire would provide



some light refreshments. At that point the election had been declared and candidates being aware of their success or otherwise.

On the Saturday night of the recent election there were only two members of the community present and even they had had enough by the end!

In fairness; the postal voting method proved positive with so many more electors participating. At this stage it is not known whether the postal voting method implied compulsion to do so given the Referendum the week before or not. This was evidenced by a few votes having no markings on them.

In summary, it is the cost above all other matters that concerns the Shire of Beverley when the final analysis revealed that, apart from greater participation, nothing else was gained and by no measure could it be described as being "fairer".

## RECOMMENDATION

**Moved:** President Cr David White  
**Seconded:** President Cr Katrina Crute

That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to advocate for a change to the current electoral system for Local Government to:

1. remove the compulsion of those Local Government entities within the Band 3 and 4 categories to opt out of the Optional Preferential Voting System to return to the First Past the Post voting system; and
2. remove the compulsion for internal elections to be carried out by optional preferential voting and return to First Past the Post method of voting.

**CARRIED**

### Action

**Suggestion:** survey regional Returning Officers of their experiences with the LG elections, also survey those 6 LGs that conducted their own elections. Provide results to the next Zone meeting.

## 12. Zone Reports

### 12.1 Zone President Report

*Cr Leigh Ballard thanked delegates for their support during his time as Zone Chair.*

### 12.2 Great Southern District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC)

President Leigh Ballard provided an update to the Zone.

**Noted**

### 12.3 Wheatbelt Interagency Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Group

President Cr Jackie McBurney had nothing to report since the last meeting.



**Noted**

#### **12.5 WALGA RoadWise**

Rodney Thornton, Regional Road Safety Advisor was an apology for this meeting.

**Noted**

### **13. Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) Business**

#### **13.1 State Councillor Report**

*President Cr Phillip Blight*

President Cr Phillip Blight provided the below report.

The annual regional meeting was held in Katanning in line with State Council policy to visit one metropolitan and one non-metropolitan zone each year.

Each local government in the Great Southern Zone had the opportunity to present to State Council and the common thread by all was housing. The shortage of accommodation was shown to be a major constraint to business and community/government. Many noting that Shires are being requested to provide housing for Police, teachers, nurses, doctors etc and local businesses have great difficulty in placing new staff.

Following shortly after that a note from Shire of West Arthur suggested that this issue (housing) be raised in the WALGA State Budget submission when the Flying Minute was active. I submitted that addition to the secretariat however it was viewed that it is of such strategic importance that it requires a specific pursuit of the subject.

The CC Zone could develop strategy position on housing.

The Matters for decision at this meeting were all endorsed by the Central Country Zone and were passed by State Council.

*After speaking to his report, Cr Blight thanked delegates for his re-election.*

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved: Jackie**

**Seconded: David White**

**That the State Councillor Report be received.**

**CARRIED**

## 13.2 WALGA Status Report

By Tony Brown, Executive Officer

### BACKGROUND

Presenting the Status Report for November 2023 which contains WALGA’s responses to the resolutions of previous Zone Meetings.

## November 2023

Zone	Agenda Item	Zone Resolution	WALGA Response	Update	WALGA Contact
Central C	2022, 18 February Zone Agenda Item 11.1	That the Central Country Zone recommend that the Local Government Agricultural Freight Group be disbanded and request WALGA to consider establishing a policy forum to encompass all Freight issues.	The Agricultural Freight Group met on 18 September and agreed to put the group into abeyance pending any specific developments or opportunities that require the group to re-establish.	Complete	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2031
Central C	23 June 2023 Zone Agenda Item 9.4 - Line Marking and Road Safety	That WALGA be requested to engage with Main Roads WA with a view to providing Local Government with greater flexibility and autonomy in relation to line marking thresholds and approval guidelines for rural and regional roads, consistent with the body of the report presented to the Central Country Zone meeting on 23 June 2023.	The Infrastructure Policy Team considered the matter on 5 July and resolved that WALGA develop an advocacy position that will provide Local Governments with greater flexibility and autonomy in providing line markings and to review the criteria for eligibility to provide and fund line marking, including audible markings, on roads to improve road safety for consideration by State Council.  A key consideration is the acceptance of (financial) maintenance responsibility for some road markings and the obligations this places on future Councils.	Dec 2023	Ian Duncan Executive Manager Infrastructure <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2031
Central C	26 August 2023 Zone Agenda Item 9.2 Water Corporation – Non-Standard Water Services	That the Central Country Zone: 1. Rejects Water Corporation attempts to classify regional sites as a ‘Non-Standard Water Service’ (unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority); 2. Formally writes to Water Corporation and the Minister for Water confirming this position; 3. Requests that WALGA supports the position of the Central Country Zone and rejects the Water Corporation’s attempts to classify regional sites as a ‘Non-Standard Water Service’; and	The Zone has sent correspondence regarding this matter. WALGA has also raised the matter with WaterCorp and will await a response to the Zone correspondence.  Following discussion with WaterCorp it is WALGA’s understanding that there has been no reduction in service to Local Governments in these areas, but instead further data about drinking water quality that has led WaterCorp to reclassify the sites.	November 2023	Nicole Matthews Executive Manager Policy <a href="mailto:nmatthews@walga.asn.au">nmatthews@walga.asn.au</a> 9213 2039

		4. Requests WALGA to engage with the Minister for Water to retain the current services, unless specific agreement is reached with a Local Government Authority.			
<b>Central C</b>	26 August 2023 Zone Agenda Item <b>12.2 Contaminated Sites</b>	That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to: 1. investigate the extent that this issue is impacting regional Local Governments with registered landfill sites; and 2. engage with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, on behalf of the sector, to ensure that the Department's requirements are proportionate to the risk associated with a particular site.	The Environment and Waste Policy Team considered this matter at their September meeting and resolved.  <b>That the Environment and Waste Policy Team:</b> 1. <b>Support the Central Country Zone recommendation; and</b> 2. <b>Agree that WALGA:</b> a. <b>Investigate the extent that this issue is impacting regional Local Governments with registered landfill sites; and</b> b. <b>Engage with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, on behalf of the sector, to ensure that the Departments requirements are proportionate to the risk associated with a particular site.</b>  WALGA staff are following up with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation to determine the extent of the issue.	<b>November 2023</b>	<b>Nicole Matthews</b> <b>Executive Manager Policy</b> nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039
<b>Central C</b>	23 June 2023 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.1 - Aboriginal Cultural Heritage</b>	That the Central Country Zone request: 1. the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage to provide information on the cost to Local Governments of implementing the regulations; 2. WALGA to collate the information from the Local Governments feedback on the Aboriginal Heritage Act and the implementation of the Regulations; and 3. the State Government to underwrite any potential costs of Local Government complying with the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act.	The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act (2021) is to be repealed and the amended Aboriginal Heritage Act (1972) is to be reintroduced.  WALGA continues to advocate for Local Government exemption for costs associated with compliance with the Aboriginal Heritage legislation, in particular the fees payable for section 18 applications,	<b>November 2023</b>	<b>Nicole Matthews</b> <b>Executive Manager Policy</b> nmatthews@walga.asn.au 9213 2039
<b>Central C</b>	5 July 2023 State Council Agenda Item <b>7.5 - Audit Experience Survey Results Summary and Advocacy Position</b>	That: 1. State Council note the Audit Experience Survey Results Summary; and 2. WALGA advocate to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to reform the audit process for Local Governments by seeking: a. Audits of Local Governments are completed and reported on in a timely manner and that	The Minister for Local Government, Hon David Michael has made a regulation change to the Financial Management regulations to only require Local Governments to revalue assets once every five years. This will occur with the next instalment of regulatory reforms as part of the current legislative reform process.	<b>November 2023</b>	<b>Tony Brown</b> <b>Executive Director member Services</b> tbrown@walga.asn.au 9213 2051

		<p>the processes, procedures and scope of audits are consistently applied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. That the OAG review the requirements for pre-audit information with a view to reducing the need for additional information where possible;</li> <li>c. That the OAG review their costing formulae for Local Government audits and show constraint in audit cost increases;</li> <li>d. That the OAG provide a breakdown on the cost of the audit and justification for any variance to the estimate to the Local Government as part of the final billing process;</li> <li>e. That auditors be required to improve their communication and information management and avoid repeated requests for information that has already been provided;</li> <li>f. That Local Governments only be required to communicate with contract Auditors (<i>unless the OAG is directly auditing the Local Government</i>) and the onus be placed on the contract Auditors to confirm their advice with the OAG before instructing the Local Government; and</li> <li>g. In-conjunction with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, review the application of Fair Value principles in the context of the audit <u>including considering removing the impost of revaluing non-financial assets (roads and footpaths) from financial reporting requirements for Local Governments.</u></li> </ul>	<p>This is very good news and an advocacy success for the Local Government sector and the Minister and Department of local Government assistance on this matter has been appreciated.</p> <p>WALGA will continue to work with the OAG to reform the audit process in line with sector feedback, with a particular focus on those issues above.</p> <p><i>Note: Amendment to Regulations were gazette on 19 October.</i></p>		
<p><b>Central C</b></p>	<p>14 April 2023 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.1 Financial Burden to Local Governments of Optional Preferential Voting</b></p>	<p>That WALGA forms a policy position and advocates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. any Western Australian Electoral Commission fee increases for the 2023 Local Government elections are capped at 10% when compared with the 2021 rates; and</li> <li>2. the CountWA software from Western Australian Electoral Commission is provided to Local Governments free of charge for the 2023 and subsequent Local Government elections.</li> </ul>	<p>WALGA's Governance Policy Team has considered this matter and has requested WALGA staff to conduct a review of Local Government elections 2015 – 2023 and provide a summary of findings in a future report, together with proposals for an alternative engagement strategy that provides for an independent assessment of WALGA's election advocacy. This work will inform advocacy to the State Government on the cost and processes involved in the WAEC conducting the elections including cost.</p>	<p><b>November 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Tony Brown</b>  <b>Executive Director,</b>  <b>Member Services</b>  <b>9213 2051</b>  <b>tbrown@walga.asn.au</b></p>

<p><b>Central C</b></p>	<p><b>2021 19 November Zone Agenda Item 12.1 Sector ICT solution</b></p>	<p>That the Zone request WALGA to research providers and the viability of an in-house IT system.</p>	<p>The idea of an all-of-sector model ICT solution is not viable for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different size Local Governments – no one size fits all;</li> <li>• Local Government’s being at different levels of need and maturity in the ICT requirements;</li> <li>• We are unlikely to get the requisite LG buy-in to warrant the investment; and</li> <li>• The inherent complexity of a custom-built system is time and cost-prohibitive.</li> </ul> <p>A more workable suggestion is for a group of similar size/maturity level Local Governments to engage a consultant to define a model set that meets their needs. Any recommendations could be reviewed by a representative of the LG ICT Managers Network to ensure it is appropriate.</p> <p>It would be expected that the following range of recommendations are achievable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable hardware requirements (including remote options where appropriate)</li> <li>• Suggested lightweight accounting software</li> <li>• Baseline model directory structure</li> <li>• Security options</li> <li>• Backup software and procedures</li> <li>• Suitable internet options</li> </ul> <p>WALGA is looking to assist in facilitating discussions on a shared service model to research this with a group of Local Governments further. Due to work priorities this work was not carried out in 2022, however work is scheduled this year.</p>	<p><b>November 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Tony Brown</b>  <b>Executive Director,</b>  <b>Member Services</b>  <b>9213 2051</b>  <b>tbrown@walga.asn.au</b></p>
<p><b>Central C</b></p>	<p>26 August 2023 Zone Agenda Item <b>9.3 Heavy Vehicles – Accredited Mass Management Scheme</b></p>	<p>That the Central Country Zone request WALGA to investigate the establishment of an Industry Working Group associated with Main Roads WA Accredited Mass Management Scheme across the Restricted Access Vehicle Network, with a view to reducing accelerated degradation and damage to rural and regional road networks as well as improving road safety for all users. Working Group membership shall be representative of relevant industry stakeholders but not necessarily be limited to (WALGA, Local Government, Main Roads WA, Department of Transport, CBH, relevant Heavy Vehicle Operators Association).</p>	<p>On-going, noting that this Zone resolution is yet to be considered by the Infrastructure Policy Team.</p>	<p><b>On-going</b></p>	<p><b>Ian Duncan</b>  <b>Executive Manager</b>  <b>Infrastructure</b>  <a href="mailto:iduncan@walga.asn.au">iduncan@walga.asn.au</a>  <b>9213 2031</b></p>



## Zone Comment

This is an opportunity for Member Councils to consider the response from WALGA in respect to the matters that were submitted at the previous Zone Meeting.

## RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Ian Thurton  
Seconded: President Cr Jackie McBurney

That the Central Country Zone, WALGA Status Report for December 2023 be noted.

**CARRIED**

### Action:

Executive Officer to follow up with WALGA staff on the Heavy Vehicles – Accredited Mass Management Scheme.

## 13.3 WALGA President's Report

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

## RECOMMENDATION

Moved: President Cr Jo Haythornthwaite  
Seconded: President Cr Phil Blight

That the Central Country Zone notes the WALGA President's Report.

**CARRIED**

## 13.4 Review of WALGA State Council Agenda – Matters for Decision

### 13.4.1 State Council Agenda Items – 6 December 2023

#### 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.

The full State Council Agenda can be found via link: [State Council Agenda 6 December](#)

The Zone is able to provide comment or submit an alternative recommendation that is then presented to the State Council for consideration.

## MATTERS FOR DECISION

### 7.1 2023 Annual General Meeting Resolutions

That:

1. the following resolutions from the 2023 WALGA Annual General Meeting be referred to the People and Place Policy Team for further work to be undertaken:
  - 5.1 Local Governments' representation at the State Administrative Tribunal relating to planning matters within its district



*That WALGA lobby the State Government for legislative reform to enable Local Governments the automatic right to be a represented party at all State Administrative Tribunal hearings related to planning matters within its district.*

## 5.2 Land Use Policy

*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.*

## 5.4 Regional and Remote Housing

*That WALGA advocates to the WA State and Commonwealth Governments to address the dire shortage of affordable key worker family housing options in regional and remote towns to encourage families to live and work in regional and remote towns. Social housing is addressed at both the State and Federal levels.*

2. State Council notes that the following resolution is being considered in Agenda item 7.2 of this meeting Agenda:

## 5.3 Transparency – Management Order Determinations

*That WALGA:*

1. *Advocates for Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage to consult and collaborate with Local Governments in reviewing and publishing its policies, decision making criteria, guidelines and procedures associated with the administration of management orders;*
2. *Ensure the review recognises the cost burden on local governments in managing reserves and options for supporting local governments in meeting that responsibility; and*
3. *Calls for proactive consultation and advice to Local Government management bodies.*

## 7.2 Advocacy Position – Crown Land and Management Order Administration – Land Administration Act 1997

That WALGA endorse the below Advocacy Position:

Crown Land and Management Order Administration - Land Administration Act 1997

*WALGA advocates to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) to:*

1. *Apply the following principles when dealing with matters affecting Local Government's role in managing Crown land:*
  - a. *Local Government is an equal partner with State Government in managing, developing and administration of Crown land for community benefit.*
  - b. *Local Government should be provided timely advice and consulted where State Government proposals impact management of or investment in Crown land.*
  - c. *Ensure timely communication with Local Government where DPLH intends to challenge an intention to levy leasing or land use revenues under a power to lease arrangement.*
  - d. *Decision-making criteria, policy and procedure transparency contributes to whole of government efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.*
2. *Publish the policies and procedures that underpin decision making regarding:*
  - a. *Establishing, varying or revoking management orders.*
  - b. *Leasing Crown land or facilities, subject to a management order.*
  - c. *Decision review where a management body or proponent lessee is dissatisfied with a decision or process.*

## 7.3 Review of Public Open Space Advocacy Positions



That WALGA endorse:

1. the deletion of Advocacy Position 4.3 *Water Management*;
2. the deletion of Advocacy Position 4.4 *Public Open Space*; and
3. new Advocacy Position 6.11 *Public Open Space* as follows:

#### 6.11 Public Open Space

*New subdivisions and developments should provide appropriate Public Open Space (POS) or POS contributions to provide environmental benefits and meet the needs of the community.*

*The State Government should take a leadership role in the strategic planning of POS, in consultation with Local Government, including:*

1. *Reviewing the requirement for a minimum 10 per cent of all new residential land to be provided as POS to determine if this metric is still appropriate.*
2. *Developing a 10+ year regional level sporting facilities plan to identify and prioritise gaps in regional sporting facilities and acquire and fund regional open spaces, specifically sporting facilities, in a timely manner to align with population growth.*
3. *Developing contemporary legislative and policy mechanisms to ensure that:*
  - a. *POS design and delivery:*
    - i. *appropriately allocates different POS uses and purposes, balancing environmental, recreational, sporting and community needs.*
    - ii. *does not have its use impeded by drainage and utilities facilities.*
    - iii. *is accessible and appropriately distributed.*
    - iv. *is cost effective to enable sustainable maintenance and replacement by Local Government.*
    - v. *is responsive to urban ecology, regional climatic conditions, and climate change.*
    - vi. *considers water requirements and availability as a priority, includes water sensitive urban design principles, and prioritises water allocations for the irrigation and maintenance of functional active recreational and sport facilities.*
  - b. *POS cash in lieu contributions are equitable, transparent, and simplified by:*
    - i. *streamlining the process to collect and expend cash in lieu contributions by delegating functions to Local Government.*
    - ii. *broadening how cash in lieu funds can be spent to include works beyond the current scope.*
    - iii. *allowing for the collection of cash in lieu contributions at development application stage and for all forms of subdivision, including two lot subdivisions or developments.*
    - iv. *investigating the option of a standard fixed rate contribution fee per lot or dwelling when contributions are intended for public open space upgrades.*
4. *Providing guidance documents and support to assist Local Governments with their strategic POS planning.*

#### **7.4 2024 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members**

That WALGA endorse the submission to the 2024 Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Remuneration Inquiry for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members.

#### **7.5 Household Hazardous Waste Policy Statement and Advocacy Position**

That WALGA:

1. Rescind the 2003 WALGA *Household Hazardous Waste Policy Statement* and Advocacy Position 7.10 *Household Hazardous Waste*; and
2. Endorse a new Household Hazardous Waste Policy Statement and Advocacy Position as follows:

#### 7.10 Household Hazardous Waste

1. *Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) is a small but significant component of the waste stream which requires specialised management strategies to protect human health, property and the environment.*
2. *This requires:*
  - a. *Effective Product Stewardship for all HHW; and*
  - b. *The maintenance and expansion of the HHW Program, funded by the State Government and Product Stewardship Schemes, to provide for the management of HHW collected from the community by Local Government.*

### 7.6 Waste Education Policy Statement and Advocacy Position

That WALGA:

1. Rescind the existing WALGA *Waste Management Education Policy Statement 2008* and Advocacy Position 7.8 Waste Management Education; and
2. Endorse a revised WALGA Waste Education Policy Statement 2023 and Advocacy Position as follows:
  1. *Waste education is essential part of waste management that empowers the community to engage in waste avoidance, reuse and recovery, and to use services correctly.*
  2. *Effective waste education requires:*
    - a. *Consistent communications by all stakeholders to ensure messages are clear and the community has confidence in the information provided.*
    - b. *A strategic and long-term investment from the State Government, with funding mechanisms in place to support and enable collaboration between Local Governments and Regional Councils.*
    - c. *Recognition of waste education in the definition of 'waste service' in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007, in order to allow a charge for waste education as part of the waste service charge.*
    - d. *Identification of priority problematic materials within the waste stream and ongoing advocacy for evidence based alternative approaches.*
    - e. *Hypothecation of the waste levy for waste management purposes only.*

### RECOMMENDATION

**Moved: President Cr Phillip Blight**  
**Seconded: President Cr Katrina Crute**

**That the Central Country Zone:**  
**Supports WALGA's *Waste Education Policy Statement and Advocacy Position* recommendation 1-2d inclusive as listed above in the December 2023 State Council Agenda with the addition of 2e, *Hypothecation of the waste levy for waste management purposes only and not to go to consolidated revenue.***

**CARRIED**

### 7.7 Submission E-Waste Landfill Ban Regulations

That WALGA endorse the Submission on the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (e-waste) Regulations 2023*.

### 7.8 Submission on Philanthropic Engagement Framework for Emergency Management

That WALGA endorse the submission to the State Emergency Management Committee on the Draft Philanthropic Engagement Framework for Emergency Management.

## **7.9 Submission to the WA Action Plan for Young People Consultation Paper**

That WALGA endorse the submission to the *WA Action Plan for Young People Consultation Paper*.

### **POLICY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- 8.1** Environment and Waste Policy Team Report
- 8.2** Governance and Organisational Services Policy Team Report
- 8.3** Infrastructure Policy Team Report
- 8.4** People and Place Policy Team Report
- 8.5** Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) Report

### **MATTERS FOR NOTING / INFORMATION**

- 9.1** Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2023 and Associated Regulations and Guidelines
- 9.2** WALGA Emergency Management Survey 2023
- 9.3** WALGA Submission on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Legislation dated 26 September 2023 and Update
- 9.4** Legal Response to the Local Government Approaches to Tree Retention Issues Paper
- 9.5** Flying Minute: Submission to the Review of the Main Roads Pedestrian Crossing Facilities Guidelines
- 9.6** Flying Minute – Draft Operational Policy 2.3: Planning for Public Open Space
- 9.7** Flying Minute – Submission on Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding Arrangements
- 9.8** Flying Minute – Objection to the 2023 WA Electoral Distribution Commission Proposed Boundaries
- 9.9** Flying Minute: Submission on the Exposure Draft of the Recycling and Waste Reduction (Export – Paper and Cardboard) Rules 202396
- 9.10** Flying Minute: Submission on National Asbestos Strategic Plan
- 9.11** Flying Minute: Draft Code of Practice for On-Site Wastewater Disposal
- 9.12** Flying Minute – 2024-25 WALGA State Budget Submission

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved: Deputy President Cr Karen Harrington**  
**Seconded: President Cr Jackie McBurney**

**That the Central Country Zone:**

- 1. Supports all Matters for Decision except item 7.6 as listed above in the December 2023 State Council Agenda; and**
- 2. Notes all Matters for Noting, Policy Team and Committee Reports and Organisational Reports as listed in the December 2023 State Council Agenda.**

**CARRIED**

## **14. Emerging Issues**

### **14.1 Challenges faced by Band 4 Local Governments after LGA amendments**

Cr Ian Turton from the Shire of Wandering

- Raised with previous LG Minister, concerns that the current Act amendments are a 'one size fits all' approach
- Lack of support for small band 4 LGs
- Cr Turton met with Tim Fraser from DLGSC and passed on a letter of concern to the new LG Minister
- Hoping to instigate some kind of gathering for small LGs to discuss common challenges
- Likely to progress in early part of next year

President Cr Jackie McBurney expressed her support for Cr Turton's suggestion of the formation of a new group to represent and advocate for small band 4 LGs.

Cr Blight suggested that when the new LG Minister attends in April, the Zone should do a presentation about the challenges of band 4 LGs. Cr Crute suggested that the focus should be broader – focus on the cost shift and impost on regional LGs to do more with the same bucket of money. The cost shifting is becoming more prevalent and is having a greater impact on communities in terms of service delivery.

#### **ACTION:**

**The WALGA Secretariat will work with the Shire of Wandering to develop a plan and presentation – will report back to the February meeting (first to the Executive Committee, with an invitation to Cr Turton).**

### **14.2 Local Government Election reforms**

Mr Stan Scott, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Cuballing

- Insufficient number of candidates, so must hold an extraordinary election
- In the meantime, an EM resigned
- Can't add this new vacancy from the recent election, also can't use the runner up from the recent election to backfill.
- Limitation to the backfilling rules – aren't interacting well with the old provisions
- Shire will now have to hold another Extraordinary election

## **15. Date, Time, and Place of Next Meetings**

The next Central Country Zone meeting will be held on Friday, 16 February commencing at 9.30am. This meeting will be hosted by the Shire of Narrogin.

## **16. Closure**

*The Chair thanked all the delegates and CEOs involved in today's elections and meeting.*

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 11:35am.



## CENTRAL COUNTRY ZONE

### WHEATBELT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION UPDATE

November 2023

This note provides an update on WDC activity (delivered or supported) during 2023 that is of relevance or potential interest to this Zone. The topics are aligned to the WDC's strategic priorities. For more information, contact the WDC.

#### Infrastructure

##### Housing

- The Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) took a lead role across the nine Regional Development Commissions in analysing regional housing issues with a view to providing evidence-based analysis of issues and proposing potential solutions to inform State Government and developers. WDC has gathered substantial information on issues in the Wheatbelt Region. A number of reports from across the Wheatbelt Region are nearing completion and will ensure Wheatbelt scenarios are strongly represented at the State level.
- This work has transitioned to a more bespoke support approach with Regional Organisations of Councils or LGAs.
- WDC is working with groups of local governments, and individual LGAs where feasible, in processes such as Growing Regions and IDF applications, and to support housing and land related gap analysis to support grant applications, including providing advice on scopes of work for consultancies.

- WDC supported completion of 4WDL ROC housing analysis, with CEO of Dumbleyung presenting to the WEROC group on their results. Alex McKenzie is now working with those individual Shires on high potential opportunities, scheme amendments, and development opportunities. For example:
  - First stage demand analysis showed unmet demand for 35-50 workers in Lake Grace.
  - Lake Grace has 18 vacant residential lots, 15 of which are State or LG owned.
  - 8 of the State lots are under consideration for inclusion in the South West Settlement.
  - 7 are fully serviced / 11 partially serviced.

##### Freight and Logistics

- ASCI is continuing to deliver on rail siding extensions throughout the Wheatbelt, Mid West and Great Southern.
- Investigations are underway for a potential recommissioning of the Narrogin-Kulin Tier 3 line, however no commitment has been made by the Government to reopen the railway and questions remain over viability should CBH decide not to utilise the asset.
- Increased freight movement through regional centres is driving a push for town bypasses, including Narrogin, and potentially Wagin.
- The initial tranche of WSFN funding \$187.5 million is largely allocated, and the group is now seeking support from Commonwealth and State Governments for further funding rounds
- The Commonwealth Government is currently undertaking a review of the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy, with a renewed focus on



supply chain resilience and decarbonisation.

## Energy

- Continued investment into renewable energy is being seen throughout the region. Concerns have been raised in relation to land use and land use policy. Evidence on scale of land use conflict is necessary.
- Communities should be aware and prepare regarding transmission upgrades – (potential to engage with Western Power or EPWA).
- WDC contributed to a workshop held by Energy Policy WA on the development of a “Facilitation Vehicle” that will manage the infrastructure build associated with the [SWIS demand assessment](#).
- The upgrades will see 50GW of renewable energy generation added and 4000km of transmission line upgrades to support expected increased demand. The FV will look to secure “social licence” for the work program. Public information sessions are available here, [Connecting renewables to our grid \(www.wa.gov.au\)](#).

## Other

- WDC engagement with JTSI Diversify WA team to support their “stocktake on the investment and trade ecosystem”; and contributed to JTSI 10 year “Science and Technology Plan” development.
- Met with newly appointed Water Corporation Regional Manager Joseph Mills to discuss strategic water planning in the Wheatbelt.
- WDC has provided support to ROCs and Shires with preparedness workshops/forums – Darkan, Nungarin – around landholder rights relating to access for renewables and critical mineral exploration development.
- Attended NBN round table at Tammin in March, updated on rollout of Fixed

Wireless upgrades across the Central East and Central Midlands. Met separately with NBN Local head, Naomi Evans.

- Continue to meet with potential investors across the region with a focus on maximising local impact of that investment, (and also communities being impacted). Includes CBH, Infinite Green Energy, FutureEnergy Australia, Chalice Mining, Caravel Mining, Procon, POSCO, ANZ-Inpex-Qantas Wheatbelt Connect, wind farm proponents in the Wheatbelt South.

## **Sustainable Landscapes and Communities**

- Shire of Merredin and Dumbleyung desalination units in process of design and installation, provided through the WaterSmart Farms initiative.
- WaterSmart Farms allocated \$5M in budget to undertake investigations for development of non-potable/non-scheme water sources for industry development – initial focus on Wheatbelt South and Upper Great Southern paleochannels, though possibility for extension to other parts of the Wheatbelt.
- WDC attended the Rural Water Council meeting in Cunderdin in October, attended by the Minister for Water, with WDC supported project WaterSmart Farms showcased by Nik Callow (UWA) and Anthony Bodycoat (Water Corporation) – more info here [WaterSmart Farms](#) and [Smart Dams](#).
- The Southern Wheatbelt Regional Drought Resilience Plan for Shires of Kondinin, Kulin, Lake Grace, Dumbleyung and Wagin was submitted to the Federal Minister for Agriculture. Once approved, \$300K will be made available to kick start implementation of the Plan –available for projects across those LGAs.
- In April, funding of \$20.2M was announced for the extension of the RDRP and the Farm Business Resilience Program in WA. WDC is

participating in RDRP 2.0, using the learning from RDRP 1.0, applying that to the remainder of the Wheatbelt region. RDRP 2.0 will have a sub-regional approach.

- WDC contributed to the Western Australia Regional Development Alliance Aboriginal Economic Development workshop held in Broome in October.
- WDC met with Inpex to discuss the progress of the Wheatbelt Connect project – a QANTAS-INPEX-ANZ initiative.
- WDC sponsored [Dowerin Downtown](#) event held on August 29, attended by 600 people, showcasing the strength of the agricultural sector in Wheatbelt to business leaders.
- Continue to provide support to Regional Organisations of Councils on approaches to exploring economic futures, understanding gaps and opportunities – with a focus on preparedness for future investment and building resilience.
- Provided an eastern Wheatbelt community with information on co-operatives across the region, including contacts and opportunities for funding.
- A/CEO Susan Hall participated as part of the Indonesia Connect Roadshow in September, representing the Regional Development Commissions.
- WDC liaison Merredin Airport owners on potential development at the site.
- Hosted Locally Grown, Globally Focused Networking Event in Narrogin in June, coinciding with the Agristart 2023 HARVEST Accelerator Cohort visit to the region.
- Via the WA Regional Development Alliance, provided input to submissions including to Minister for Regional Development on Childcare in the regions; National Reconstruction Fund (Fed Govt); Advanced Biofuels Initiative (DPIRD); Regional Net Zero Transformations Initiative (JTSI).

- Research into childcare issues in the region raised key issues including were staffing, training and housing for staff.
- WDC have been active in visiting and attending, or presenting to a range of groups across the central east region
- WDC Board met in Darkan in October, including a tour hosted by the Shire of West Arthur.
- Robyn Sermon, CEO of the Royal Agricultural Society, was appointed [the new Chair of the WDC](#) on 6 November 2023.
- Local government vacancies are expected to be filled early in 2024.
- WDC Strategic Plan 2024-26 being finalised.

### **Local Content**

- Each of the 9 Regional Development Commissions will play a greater role in driving local content in their respective regions, with the Local Content Officers being transferred from DPIRD to the Commissions.
- Work will continue on maximising local content in Government contracts and the WDC will work towards gaining a greater commitment by large private companies to local content in their goods and services purchasing.

### **RED Grants Round 6**

- [RED grant recipients](#) announced on October 31, 6 projects shared in \$575K funding. This includes projects in Nomans Lake and Wandering.
- Continuing to support RED grant recipients in progression of their projects and in the execution of Small Grant Election Commitments.



Australian Government



**mainroads**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**BUILDING OUR FUTURE**

# Central Country Zone Main Roads Report

November 2023



# Funding

Main Roads is awaiting final sign off for the low-cost shoulder sealing projects (high level confidence).

## 2023/24 Works

- Albany Hwy
  - Significant pavement repairs (multiple locations) – both inhouse delivery and contractors - commenced 11 Nov 2023 – April 2024
- Collie Lake King Rd
  - Pavement repairs (between Wagin and Arthur River, Lake Grace to east of Newdegate, Lake Grace townsite and Newdegate townsite) – Nov 2023 – Jan 2024
  - Rehab (between Wagin and Kukerin - 5.58 km) – inhouse delivery - 2024
  - Resealing (will follow pavement repairs) – 2024
  - Albany Hwy / Arthur Road intersection to be repaired
- Northam Cranbrook Rd
  - Rehabilitation and widening (within the section to the north of Brookton – 6.73 km) – 2024
- Brookton Hwy
  - Pavement repairs focusing between Brookton and Corrigin - 2024
- Narrogin Kondinin Rd
  - Shoulder sealing (Kulin – Kondinin) (awaiting final sign off for funding)
  - Pavement repairs (various sections) – 2024

## Staff

- Fred Steer – Acting Operations Manager Narrogin replacing Brad Pearce
- Vel Khokulen – Acting Asset Manager Structures replacing Tony Humphries



<b>Member Council</b>	<b>Red Tape Issue</b>
Shire of Beverley	
Shire of Brookton	
Shire of Corrigin	
Shire of Cuballing	

<b>Shire of Dumbleyung</b>	
<b>Shire of Kulin</b>	
<b>Shire of Lake Grace</b>	
<b>Shire of Narrogin</b>	
<b>Shire of Pingelly</b>	
<b>Shire of Quairading</b>	

<b>Shire of Wagin</b>	
<b>Shire of Wandering</b>	
<b>Shire of West Arthur</b>	
<b>Shire of Wickepin</b>	
<b>Shire of Williams</b>	



# STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2024-25





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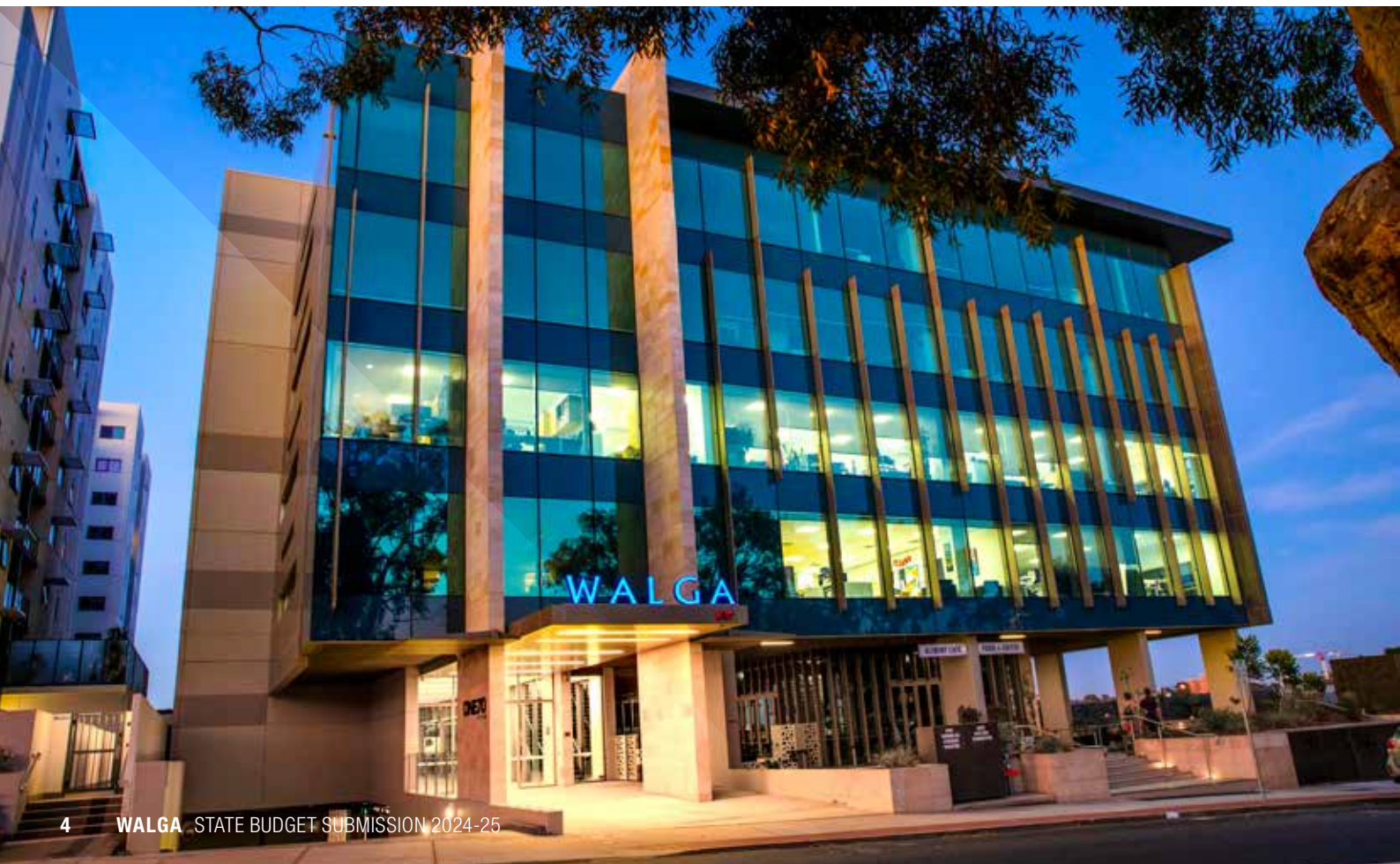
## ABOUT WALGA

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

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

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

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







# INTRODUCTION

The 2024-25 State Budget will once again be delivered in a challenging economic environment.

While Western Australia has benefited from the recent economic turbulence with an export-oriented economy delivering record surpluses, low unemployment and economic growth, the global economy is forecast to slow in coming years, which will impact the domestic and WA economies.

Soaring living costs, fuelled by historically high inflation and a steep rise in interest rates, continue to take a toll on households. Many WA households have been forced to tighten their belts, as can be seen in the decline in retail spending and the slowdown in housing activity.

Business and Governments are also feeling the impacts of high inflation and labour shortages. The State Government has experienced rising costs of program and infrastructure delivery, and challenges to progress its asset investment program within the expected timeframe.

Local Governments have faced a similar challenge, reflected in the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) which peaked at 6.4% over the year to June 2022, and grew a further 4.4% over the year to June 2023. Construction costs have been a key pressure point for the sector in recent times, growing at double-digit rates.

Further, Local Governments are seeing new cost pressures emerging in the form of wages and employee costs, which represent around a third of the sector's total cost base. A significant number of Local Governments are reporting demands for pay increases well above the Wage Price Index as part of recent enterprise bargaining.

These escalating costs and labour market constraints are making it particularly difficult for Local Governments to deliver on the community's growing needs and expectations.

In this environment, it is more important than ever that all levels of Government direct spending to services, programs and infrastructure that provide real value and make a positive difference to the community.

The State Government's strong budget position provides significant capacity to address immediate and long-term challenges. The latest estimates contained in the 2023-24 Budget show that WA is expected to record a budget surplus of \$2.3 billion in 2024-25, with similar strong surpluses expected across the remaining forward estimates.

WALGA's submission in advance of the 2024-25 State Budget contains initiatives that Local Governments, and the communities they represent, consider to be priority areas for investment. These initiatives are consistent with the sector's aspirations to enhance community wellbeing and enable economic prosperity, and seek to contribute towards the following important outcomes:

- Safer roads
- Community Infrastructure that meets the needs of a changing population
- Climate Action
- Accelerate the transition to a circular economy
- Disaster resilient communities
- Address gaps in community services
- Better governance and oversight

WALGA and its Member Local Governments welcome the opportunity to work with the State Government to progress these critical objectives.



# 1

## SAFER ROADS



# SAVE LIVES AND REDUCE SERIOUS INJURY ON HIGH-SPEED LOCAL ROADS

Between 2017 and 2021, over 500 people lost their lives, and more than 2,900 suffered serious injuries on regional roads in WA. Shockingly, one out of every two of these incidents occurred on Local Government roads, equating to approximately 300 people losing their lives per year.

In 2022 the fatality rate in regional WA stands at 18.7 per 100,000 population, in stark contrast to 2.84 per 100,000 population in the Perth metropolitan area.

Over 70% of all fatal and serious injury crashes in regional WA result from run-off-road or head-on collisions. Improving safety in this context poses significant challenges due to the extensive, remote, and lightly trafficked nature of this road network.

A Business Case led by the RAC in partnership with WALGA and Main Roads WA, with support from ARRB (National Transport Research Organisation), proposes a program to reduce the disproportionately high rate of fatal and serious injury crashes on high-speed Local Government-managed roads in regional and peri-urban areas. This Business Case prioritises 439 high-speed Local Government roads covering 8,208 kilometres – approximately one-third of WA's network – and provides a process for selecting appropriate, proven, cost-effective countermeasures, a safety assessment and a return-on-investment analysis.

To assess the program's effectiveness, assessments were conducted to quantify its impact, including before-and-after comparisons of star safety ratings and estimates of killed and seriously injured reductions resulting from the addition of countermeasures. The analysis indicates the following road safety benefits:

- A reduction of 138 fatalities and 489 serious injuries over the 30-year lifespan of the countermeasures,
- An average before Star Rating Score of 38.4 is reduced to 29.1 after implementing the countermeasures,
- An average 23.6% improvement in the Star Rating Score (relative risk safety improvement).

The program aligns with both National and State road safety goals, particularly in WA's Road Safety Framework, focusing on "building safer roads and road systems" and the emphasis on regional roads in Driving Change, Road Safety Strategy for WA 2020 – 2030. Reducing fatalities and serious injuries on Local Government-managed roads is crucial to achieving the State Government's target of a 50 – 70% reduction in such incidents by 2030.

## Funding contribution for works identified in the Business Case for Regional Road Network Safety Improvements on high-speed Local Government Roads



### FUNDING REQUIRED

# \$110 million

over five years from 2024-25, as a 20% co-contribution towards the total program cost of \$552 million



### PROGRAM BENEFITS

- A reduction of 138 deaths and 489 serious injuries over 30 years
- Improvement in road safety reflected in an average 23.6% improvement in the road Star Rating Score (relative risk safety improvement)
- Contribute to the achievement of National and State road safety goals



# INCORPORATE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS INTO RURAL ROAD PRESERVATION PROJECTS

Preservation projects typically involve resealing the road to maintain its condition, essentially replacing like with like. There is an opportunity to incorporate low-cost road safety improvements into preservation projects that are programmed or already underway. However, there is currently no designated funding source for this crucial work.

Low-cost road safety improvements such as adding audible edge-lines, paved shoulders, improvements to skid resistance, guideposts, and centrelines are proven to reduce run-off road crashes, which are the most significant crash type in regional WA. These improvements can be delivered more cost-effectively if undertaken in conjunction with preservation works and will typically cost less than 10% of the total road preservation project cost. Implementing road safety improvements with preservation works, which typically occur at the end of the useful life of a road, also ensures that investment in existing roads is maximised.

The proposed program aligns with both National and State road safety goals, particularly those in WA's Road Safety Framework focusing on "building safer roads and road systems" and the emphasis on regional roads in Driving Change, Road Safety Strategy for WA 2020 – 2030.

To facilitate the incorporation of low-cost road safety improvements during preservation works, it is proposed to establish a grant program to fund these safety treatments on a case-by-case basis. Funding would be provided for up to an additional 10% of the total project cost per project. The funding would be provided under the governance of Regional Road Groups and would be administered by WALGA and Main Roads WA.

**Additional funding to enable Local Governments to incorporate cost-effective road safety enhancements into rural road preservation projects.**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$2 million per year**

from 2024-25 to 2028-29



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Efficient delivery of proven safety improvements at minimal additional cost
- Reduced run-off road crashes on rural roads
- Contribute to the achievement of National and State road safety goals

# SAFER STUDENT CROSSINGS

Manned Children's Crossings are designed to provide a safe location for students to cross roads during their school commute. However, high traffic speed and volumes can create unsafe conditions for both students and Traffic Wardens.

Enabling students to safely walk and ride to local schools reduces car trips, congestion and parking pressure, as well as improved health outcomes through increased physical activity.

Responsibility for implementing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure for Children's Crossings lies with both Main Roads WA and Local Governments. WA Police, schools or other relevant groups provide Traffic Wardens, depending on the specific crossing. WA Police maintain the Children's Crossings Unit, which administers the Children's Crossings program.

WA Police data shows there is a chronic shortage of Traffic Wardens throughout Western Australia and that the average age of a Traffic Warden is 76. This shortage means it is not possible to staff all crossings. High traffic and student volume crossings receive priority, while others remain unmanned. The absence of Traffic Wardens on short notice can also result in crossings being uncontrolled, increasing the risk to students.

To address these safety concerns and allow the redeployment of Traffic Wardens to less dangerous or unmanned crossings, a priority is to invest in the necessary infrastructure to convert 30 Children's Crossings on high-volume, high-speed roads to signalled pedestrian crossings.

This initiative will improve the safety of students' daily school commute and promote active transport. Additionally, by reducing the number of Traffic Wardens required to manage high-speed, high-volume traffic, Traffic Wardens can be redeployed to other safer crossings, which are currently unmanned due to the shortage of traffic wardens across WA.

**Reduce danger to children and Traffic Wardens by converting 30 Children's Crossings on multi-lane, high-speed, high-volume roads to signalled pedestrian crossings.**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$5 million**

between 2024-25 and 2028-29



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Enhanced safety for children walking or cycling to school
- Reduced risk and reliance on Traffic Wardens and greater flexibility to redeploy Wardens to less dangerous or unmanned crossings
- Supports a safer, more connected pedestrian network
- Enable and encourage more children to use active transport to travel to school

# 2

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A CHANGING POPULATION





# ADDRESS GAPS ON THE LONG-TERM CYCLE NETWORK

The Long-Term Cycle Network (LTCN) is linked to the Perth and Peel @ 3.5 Million Strategy and provides an overarching plan for the provision of infrastructure for cycling, both in the Perth Metropolitan region and in regional areas.

While cycling infrastructure is provided by both State and Local Governments, a lack of a coordinated blueprint for cycling facilities between levels of government has led to an incomplete network throughout WA. In particular, gaps in the network persist between key destinations including railway stations, key community activity centres and Principal Shared Paths. The LTCN identifies many of these gaps and provides a framework to fill them.

Local Governments provided critical input into the development of the LTCN and into the identification of key routes for cyclists. Many of the key routes are on Local Government managed roads/land and will require funding for detailed studies, design, and consultation with residents to develop the projects as well as funding for construction.

Though some grant funding is available to construct bicycle facilities on the LTCN network (Western Australian Bicycle Network Grant Program), these grants also fund the preparation of bicycle planning documents and Active Transport Officer positions at the Local Government level. With the limited grant funding only addressing a fraction of the identified need, Local Governments also implement projects on the LTCN within the limitations of their works program budgeting.

To accelerate progress on the LTCN, an external grant program focused solely on project implementation will help Local Governments to leverage their limited funding resources to construct bicycle infrastructure and ultimately support the realisation of the LTCN much sooner.

By convening a competitive grant process with a one third (Local Government) to two thirds (State Government) split, the most important cycling infrastructure connections can be prioritised for rapid and effective implementation within Local Government budget constraints.

**Provide funding for Local Governments to implement key connecting projects on the State Government's Long-Term Cycle Network**



**FUNDING REQUIRED**

**\$10 million**

between 2024-25 and 2028-29, to support competitive grant allocations totalling up to \$2 million per year



**PROGRAM BENEFITS**

- Address gaps in the network between key destinations such as railway stations, activity centres and Principal Shared Paths
- Support cross-boundary planning for Active Transport
- Contribute to the provision of a continuous network of Active Transport Infrastructure

# MEET GROWING DEMAND FOR SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Sport and recreation facilities offer well-documented health and wellbeing benefits and serve as central community hubs, particularly in regional areas. Investment in these facilities leads to broader advantages, including reduced health and welfare costs, lower crime rates, increased employment opportunities, and economic growth.

These benefits were reflected in the 2022 SportWest study on the social return on investment of sport within WA, which found that:

- Organised sport in WA delivers an estimated gross benefit of \$10.3 billion per year,
- For every dollar of economic and social investment into sport, more than \$7 of economic and social benefit are fostered,
- Each participant in organised sport in WA realises a return of \$10,178 from their participation.

As well as supporting community health and wellbeing, CSRFF expenditure is also a generator of economic activity. The Department of Sport and Recreation report *More than Winning* estimated that every dollar invested by the State Government through the CSRFF generates \$2.36 in direct economic activity and \$6.51 in total economic activity<sup>1</sup>.

Despite the benefits of sport and recreation for the community, the State Infrastructure Strategy<sup>2</sup> identified that there is a gap in the planning and delivery of regional-level sporting facilities necessary to cater to a growing population in the metropolitan area and major regional centres. SportWest's *Strategic Priorities for WA Sport* also highlights the need for greater investment in sporting infrastructure in response to increasing in-fill within the Perth metropolitan area and the phenomenal growth in women's and girl's sport participation.<sup>3</sup>

Addressing these gaps will require both an increase to funding and enhanced planning for sport and recreation facilities.

There has been some recognition in recent years of the need for additional funding for sport and recreation facilities, with additional funding provided for the CSRFF in the 2023-24 State Budget. However, the increase is only temporary for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years. This will not be sufficient to keep pace with demand as our population continues to rise in coming years. The CSRFF already remains oversubscribed by millions each year, and also has not been adjusted to reflect increases in construction and management costs that have occurred following the COVID pandemic.

**Increase the Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund to \$25 million per annum to meet the needs of the State's growing population, and publish a 10-year regional-level sporting plan.**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

AN INCREASE OF

**\$5 million per annum**

and an ongoing commitment of \$25 million per annum



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Meet growing community demand for the provision of quality sporting facilities
- Improved community health, wellbeing and social inclusion
- Reduced health and welfare costs
- Generate economic activity and employment
- Increased youth engagement
- Protection of open space and natural areas



As well as additional funding, there is also a need to improve forward planning to ensure equitable access to regional-level sporting infrastructure and inform investment priorities in the Perth and Peel regions and major regional centres.

The catchment areas for these facilities are large and often cross Local Government boundaries, and the infrastructure is expensive to build, operate and maintain.

The State Infrastructure Strategy recommended the development of a 10+ year regional-level sporting facilities plan to identify gaps in the current provision of regional-level sporting and recreation facilities. Opportunities for shared spaces, including multi-use and co-located spaces, should also be explored, for instance, with libraries, education facilities and activity centres. The Strategy implementation should be supported by dedicated funding.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has assessed the statewide need for public open space for the purposes of sport and recreation, with the next step being a gap analysis to determine the need for future provision in the sporting landscape. This work would inform the targeted effort required to plan for regional level sporting facility infrastructure needs and locations, primary functions, ongoing operational responsibilities, as well as resulting land use and community infrastructure plans, and ultimately investment decisions.

Local Governments have a significant role to play in the planning, development and maintenance of regional-level sporting facilities and are an important stakeholder to engage in securing land, planning for and delivering these facilities.



# INCREASE INVESTMENT IN ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

Local Government is an important provider of arts and cultural infrastructure across WA. This includes 232 public libraries and hundreds of cultural centres, performance spaces, theatres, galleries and museums.

Access to arts and culture promotes social cohesion, mental well-being and educational benefits for communities. The arts sector also drives growth through tourism and economic activity that is critical to communities, especially in the regions. Over 78% of the State's population participated in an arts and cultural activity from April 2022 to April 2023. However, there is a lack of sustainable State Government investment in arts and culture infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

State and Federal funding for community arts and culture centres is predominantly grant-based with an oversubscription to current funding opportunities.<sup>5</sup> Within WA, funding through Lotterywest and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) is focused on delivery of one-off arts programs and performances rather than funding for cultural infrastructure. There are currently no funding programs targeted at directly reducing costs for Local Governments owning and operating community cultural and arts centres.<sup>6</sup> Existing cultural assets are becoming run down due to long-term insufficient investment in cultural infrastructure maintenance.<sup>7</sup>

DLGSC's *Western Australian Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+* sets the ambition of positioning the State as the most culturally engaged State in Australia.<sup>8</sup> However the Framework does not have dedicated funding for implementation, limiting the State's capacity to achieve that goal.

The need to prioritise investment in cultural infrastructure is also raised in the *2022 State Infrastructure Strategy*. The Strategy reports that arts and culture received a proportionally small budget of \$177 million (or 2%) of the total \$7.5 billion Asset Investment Program, with no focus on regional needs.<sup>9</sup>

DLGSC's Strategic Directions 2016-31 set out a long-term vision for the WA arts and culture sector. However, many achievements do not have financial backing to be implemented or are Perth CBD-centric, passing over community arts and cultural centres in the wider metropolitan and regional areas.<sup>10</sup>

Other jurisdictions have dedicated funding streams for cultural infrastructure. The New South Wales Government launched the first round of the State Regional Cultural Fund in 2018 to support regional arts and cultural organisations to invest in infrastructure. The fund has received increased funding each

**Establish a Community Arts and Culture Facilities Fund for the construction and maintenance of arts and cultural infrastructure across WA.**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$25 million per year**

from 2024-25 to establish a Community Arts and Culture Facilities Fund



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Meet growing community demand for the provision of arts and cultural infrastructure across WA
- Address maintenance issues with existing arts and cultural infrastructure
- Enhance community well-being and community capacity-building
- Generate local and State level economic activity
- Improve liveability of regional areas





round with over \$100 million shared across 146 projects across the state.<sup>11</sup> In 2016, the Victoria Government launched their Multicultural Community Infrastructure Fund, which has funded over \$4.5 million worth of projects in 2021-22 alone.<sup>12</sup>

Local Governments invest heavily in the ongoing management of many cultural facilities, including all but one of the State's Regional Arts and Entertainment Centres.<sup>13</sup> The Australian Local Government Association has reported that over \$91 billion worth of local government buildings and facilities needed replacement

with many in poor condition, poor function and with poor capacity. With increasing competing pressures on ratepayer income, the sectors' ability to prioritise spend on arts and culture will reduce.

The creation of an ongoing Community Cultural and Arts Facility Fund, similar to the Community Sports and Recreation Facilities Fund, would provide the capital funding commitment to underpin the ambition of the *Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+* and drive positive social and economic outcomes across the State.

# MORE ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Accessibility of community infrastructure such as community centres, recreation facilities, parks and playgrounds are vital to creating inclusive, welcoming communities that enable participation, self-representation, and economic opportunities for people living with disability and older people.

In WA there are around 411,500 people living with disability<sup>14</sup>, with one in three experiencing difficulty accessing buildings.<sup>15</sup> The need for improved accessibility is set to continue to increase with WA's growing and ageing population.

The *Western Australian State Disability Strategy* highlights infrastructure as a strategic priority for achieving inclusive communities. The Strategy's Second Action Plan includes actions for State Government agencies to achieve outcome five, 'Community infrastructure is accessible to all'.<sup>16</sup> With Local Government being the level of government closest to the community, they are uniquely positioned to support the State Government to implement this commitment.

The *Disability Services Act 1993* (DSA) requires Local Governments to develop and implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIP), including addressing the specific outcome that 'people with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access buildings and facilities'. The *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Minister's Progress Report 2021-2022* references multiple Local Government case studies as positive examples of progress towards delivering inclusive communities.<sup>17</sup>

New infrastructure projects take into consideration universal access requirements, however retrofitting accessibility features to existing infrastructure requires considerable additional funding as well as planning on a case-by-case basis.

In April 2023, WALGA partnered with the Office of Disability to facilitate consultation activities as part of the proposed DSA reforms. Local Government feedback highlighted that lack of funding is a barrier to improvement of accessibility of community facilities.

**Funding to Local Government to improve the physical accessibility of community facilities and infrastructure.**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$10 million per year**

from 2024-25 for Local Government infrastructure access improvement projects, including parks and playgrounds, administration buildings, community centres and recreation facilities



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Improved access and inclusion for people with a disability and older people
- Increased economic activity and employment





IMAGE CREDIT: City of Belmont

To ensure access to key infrastructure for all community members, Local Governments are increasing rates to raise the required revenue. For example, the Town of Cambridge's 2023-24 budget includes a 2% increase to rates for access upgrades to toilets at two recreation facilities.

The Australian Local Government Association 2021 National State of the Assets Report identified that buildings and facilities make up 16% of total Local Government infrastructure and 40% are in very poor to fair condition. These results are consistent with the 2018 report, indicating a plateau of investment in community infrastructure maintenance.



# 3

## CLIMATE ACTION



# MANAGE COASTAL EROSION AND INUNDATION

Climate change induced sea level rise presents a real and direct threat to the liveability of our communities. Appropriate planning and action are required now to ensure WA's coastal 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 increasingly vulnerable to both coastal erosion and inundation. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 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>18</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.

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. However, the cost to manage these hotspots is well beyond the financial and technical capacity of Local Government.

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. Other locations that were not identified as a hotspot but are experiencing erosion and require management were not included, nor did the funding adequately reflect the significant cost of managing and adapting to coastal inundation.

In 2020-21, additional funding for CoastWA was approved, representing a State Government investment of \$33.5 million over five years from 2021 to 2026.

**Additional funding to support Local Governments to complete and implement coastal hazard risk assessment and adaptation plans to address coastal erosion and inundation.**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$28 million**

between 2024-25 and 2025-26 to increase funding for CoastWA

- Changes to CoastWA to maximise the return on State Government investment
- Extension of the CoastWA program beyond 2025-26 to meet ongoing erosion and inundation management needs



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Better protection and management of valuable coastal infrastructure that enables recreation, tourism and other economic activities
- Promotes a strategic, long-term approach to coastal erosion management and coastal adaptation across WA
- Management and adaptation to coastal hazard threats and pressures in line with the WA Coastal Zone Strategy and State Planning Policy



### 3 CLIMATE ACTION

However, this level of investment remains insufficient, with the amount available to local coastal managers well below the State Government's own estimate of what is required to effectively manage the identified hotspots and create climate resilient communities. This has been reflected in the 2023-24 CoastWA grant programs, which were all over-subscribed, with only half of the project applications receiving funding.

As impacts on our coastline increase and Local Governments have to ramp up their management efforts and plan and implement significant and more complex adaptation projects, it is essential that funding keeps pace.

In the 2024-25 Budget, WALGA is seeking increased funding of \$28 million for the last two years of CoastWA, with most of this increase to be allocated to CoastWA grants.

In addition, it is imperative that the CoastWA program is extended beyond its existing five years (2026-27 onwards) and is adequately resourced on an ongoing basis to reflect the true costs of adapting to future erosion and inundation hazards.

To maximise the return on the State Government's investment, the administration of CoastWA funding needs to be amended to support the scale and complexity of projects including:

- **Extending timeframes for implementation of projects.** It is unrealistic to expect large scale construction projects to be implemented within one financial year.
- **Increasing maximum grant funding to allow for large-scale projects to be funded from CoastWA.** For example, Stage One of the Port Beach erosion project – at a cost of \$3,25 million – could not be funded from CoastWA.
- **Align CoastWA grant funding rounds to leverage Federal Government funding to support larger scale projects.** This will allow Local Governments to use CoastWA funding as part of their co-contribution to Commonwealth funded projects.
- **Reduce co-contribution requirements.** Large scale coastal adaptation projects can be very costly and smaller Local Governments with a lower rate base may not be able to provide a 50% co-contribution. Consideration should be given to reducing the co-contribution required for smaller Local Governments.





# COOLER CITIES AND SHADIER SUBURBS

Trees are crucial to mitigate the impacts of climate change in urban areas, providing shade and reducing heat, while also creating liveable neighbourhoods, improving air quality, enhancing biodiversity and promoting psychological and emotional wellbeing.<sup>19 20</sup>

With climate projections of higher temperatures, more very hot days and longer and more intense heatwaves this role will become even more important. The impacts will be more pronounced in urban areas as a result of the heat island effect caused by heat absorbing materials used in roads and buildings.

Overall canopy cover in Perth is 16%,<sup>21 22</sup> the lowest of any major Australian city and only 22% of Perth's suburbs have canopy cover above 20%.<sup>23</sup> Between 2011 and 2020 one quarter of Perth's urban canopy has been lost, largely through the clearing of private land for development.

Local Governments are working hard to implement measures to reduce tree loss on private land and undertake comprehensive tree planting programs on street verges, parks and other public areas. The State Government's Urban Greening Grant Program, announced in the 2023-24 budget, is a positive step in addressing the loss of canopy, however more needs to be done to reverse this decline.

Expanding the Local Government Urban Forest Grant Program for metropolitan and regional urban centres will provide an immediate action to arrest the decline in canopy cover. Through this program, funds are provided to Local Governments, through a competitive grant program, to be spent on tree purchase, planting and associated works to support ongoing tree health in areas of low canopy cover and increased vulnerability to heat. Experience from the Water Corporation's Urban Canopy Grant program indicates that these funds would deliver around 100,000 trees.

A comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy, accompanied by a significant investment in tree planting, is required immediately to address the decline in canopy cover. 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, and a review of the current policy settings around the treatment of trees, particularly in greenfield and infill developments.

The strategy should be developed with the objective of creating a resilient, connected, expanded and equitable urban forest, and set a minimum tree canopy target of 30% by 2040 for the Perth and Peel regions.

## Expand the Urban Greening Grant Program to plant 100,000 trees and develop a State Urban Forest Strategy



### FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$20 million**

between 2024-25 and 2027-28 to expand the Urban Greening Grant Program

**\$1 million**

in 2024-25 for the creation of a State-Wide Urban Forest Strategy



### PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Increased climate change resilience
- Reduced impact of urban heat on vulnerable communities
- Improved liveability and amenity of metropolitan and regional urban centres

# STRENGTHEN LOCAL CAPACITY TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Local Governments in WA are taking action on climate change, energy and sustainability. 53 Local Governments – representing more than 70% of the State’s population – have signed WALGA’s Climate Change Declaration.

Funding to facilitate collaboration between Local Governments across WA will rapidly build economic, social and environmental resilience and scale up existing action to support State priorities.

The Regional Climate Alliance (RCA) program supported two Alliances (Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils and South Coast Alliance) to progress collaborative and impactful climate mitigation and adaptation activities, undertaken by a dedicated Climate Coordinator.

Key achievements from the pilot program included: a regional carbon emissions baseline study; a climate risk and adaptation plan; an educational program to help small businesses assess their emissions; and a project on sustainable building design focussed on reducing emissions on Council buildings.

The evaluation of the Pilot showed that collectively, Local Governments, with State Government, industry, and community support, are well-placed to lead and build on-ground climate resilience across WA.

Additional funding to expand the Alliance model across the whole State will strengthen collaborative partnerships and realise larger scale, holistic action against climate impacts than can be achieved by individual Local Governments.

The funding should include provision for a central State Coordinator to support collaborative and targeted on-ground climate activities, governance, information sharing and capacity building across the Climate Alliances. This position has been instrumental in the success of similar Alliance models in other States.

## Expand the Regional Climate Alliance Program.



### FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$3 million annually**

from 2024-25 to fund a Climate Alliance program for all Local Governments in WA



### PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Strengthened Local Government capacity to act on climate change, energy and sustainability through coordinated training and professional development programs.
- On-ground targeted projects to tackle climate change and build resilience across WA, particularly in vulnerable and remote communities, that support Commonwealth and State Government priorities and targets



# 4

## ACCELERATE THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY



# FUND STRATEGIC WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

When the Kwinana and Rockingham Waste to Energy Facilities are operational in late 2025, the amount of waste to landfill will drop significantly. In line with this, the total revenue raised through the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy (WARR Levy) will also decline.

Currently, the WARR Levy generates about \$80 million annually, of which 25% is directed to Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account for waste related activities. The remainder funds the operating costs of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER). Of the \$20 million that is directed to the WARR Account, approximately 40% is expended on Departmental staffing, with the remaining \$12 million directed to on ground projects and activities.

The Department is reliant on the WARR levy for a significant proportion of its operational budget (approximately \$68 million). The projected fall in revenue from the WARR levy will necessitate a review of waste management and DWER funding going forward.

The WARR Strategy is due for review, and the Directions Paper identifies the good work which has been made possible through the funding from the WARR Levy. WALGA's Submission on the Directions Paper highlights that while progress has been made there is a need for further focus on Waste Avoidance, Commercial and Industrial Waste and support for regional and remote areas.<sup>24</sup>

WALGA considers that full hypothecation of the WARR Levy is needed to deliver strategic waste initiatives focusing on waste avoidance and maximising resource recovery. The operational costs for DWER should be funded through consolidated revenue.

Further investment in waste will assist the State Government to achieve its net zero by 2050 goal. For example, food waste makes up approximately 3.5% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

With additional funding for waste activities, a comprehensive investment approach could be taken, with significant funding directed towards food waste avoidance at the household level. This could have broader benefits for Western Australians, including potentially reducing the cost of living by up to \$2,500 per household annually.<sup>25</sup>

Interventions that could be funded by redirecting the full amount of WARR levy revenue to waste activities include:

**Full hypothecation of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy to waste initiatives focusing on waste avoidance and maximising resource recovery**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$80 million per annum**

from 2024-25 from the WARR Levy be directed to waste initiatives, including waste avoidance programs, investment in regional and remote waste management and interventions for the Commercial & Industrial (C&I) waste sector

**\$68 million per year**

additional funding from 2024-25, from consolidated revenue for operational costs for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) to cover the Levy reallocation



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Reduce carbon emissions and assist State Government to meet the goal of net zero by 2050
- Contribute to the achievement of the WARR Strategy Targets
- Creation of new jobs in waste recovery
- Ensure sustainable long-term funding for DWER
- Assist the community to reduce cost of living through waste avoidance





- Additional funding over two years to cover the entire cost of FOGO implementation for Local Government, including funding to Local Governments that have already introduced FOGO. A two-year implementation period is required as not all Local Governments can undertake the transition to FOGO immediately.
- Household Food Waste avoidance interventions to provide the community with hands on opportunities and tools to learn how to reduce their food waste and reduce their ongoing costs.
- Regional Waste Management Planning and Infrastructure investment to ensure all regional waste management facilities are operating to meet better practice standards by 2030 (a target in the Waste Strategy)
- Funding for Material Recovery Facility (MRF) infrastructure upgrades to ensure maximum recovery from the kerbside bin.
- Increased funding for the WasteSorted Bin Tagging Program to support Local Governments to educate and engage the community in how to maximise resource recovery and reduce contamination.
- Funding to establish and maintain a Commercial & Industrial Waste Program to engage and assist small to medium businesses to reduce their waste and improve their environmental performance.
- Funding for the continuation of existing programs, including the Household Hazardous Waste Program and waste education.



# 5

## DISASTER RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



# INCREASE SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER BUSH FIRE BRIGADES AND STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Increase Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS) funding to meet the current and future needs of Local Government volunteer Bush Fire Brigades and State Emergency Service



## FUNDING REQUIRED

ADDITIONAL

**\$2.8 million**

in the annual LGGS operating grant budget from 2024-25 for Bush Fire Brigades

**\$5 million**

in 2024-25 to fund an audit of assets for Local Government Bush Fire Brigades and State Emergency Services to inform the preparation of a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan and a strategic redesign of the LGGS to meet the future needs of WA emergency services

ADDITIONAL

**\$45.5 million**

in 2024-25, to clear the backlog of unsuccessful 2023-24 Capital Grants requests for Bush Fire Brigades

## Increased funding from the Emergency Services Levy (ESL)

allocated for LGGS capital grants to meet the future emergency response capability needs of Bush Fire Brigades:

- The total value of funding required should be informed by the Asset Management Plan and strategic redesign of the LGGS. It is estimated that at least \$66.7 million per annum will be required from 2025-26.



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Stronger local disaster and emergency response capabilities
- Safe and efficient operation of Local Government volunteer Bush Fire Brigades,
- Improved volunteer attraction and retention

in accordance with obligations of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*



## INCREASE SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER BUSH FIRE BRIGADES AND STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE CONTINUED

Local Government volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFBs) and State Emergency Services (SES) are critical to the State’s emergency and disaster response capability and foster community cohesion, particularly in regional areas. WA Local Governments manage 563 BFBs with approximately 20,000 volunteers and administer funding for both BFBs and SES.

BFBs and SES units are primarily funded through the LGGGS which is funded from the ESL.

LGGGS funding has not kept pace with rising operational and capital costs of BFBs, including:

- buildings, equipment, materials and labour
- more stringent Work Health and Safety standards
- the changing composition of the volunteer workforce, for example bathroom facilities for the increasing number of female volunteers
- higher insurance premiums

Local Governments’ LGGGS capital funding requests have consistently exceeded available funding, and the gap is growing. In 2017-18 the gap between total funding requested and funding approved was \$3.4 million. By 2022 - 23 the total gap had grown to \$23.2 million. The 2023-24 the LGGGS capital budget was \$21.1 million. \$18.7 million of this was committed to the Fleet Assets Annual Build Program and previously approved projects, leaving only \$2.5 million available to meet Local Government’s additional capital requests which totalled \$48 million. Only 5% of additional requests were funded.

The Office of the Auditor General Performance Audit into Funding of Volunteer Emergency and Fire Services 2022

recommended that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) work with the Local Government sector to adopt a State-wide strategic approach to Grants Scheme funding based on a more comprehensive understanding of LG entities’ longer term operating and capital costs.

WALGA is proposing an audit of buildings, facilities, appliances, vehicles and major items of equipment for Local Government BFBs and the SES to inform the preparation of a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan. This plan would guide the efficient allocation of funds and assist to inform the re-design of a strategic funding approach to better forecast the emergency response needs of communities over the next decade and support the creation of a sustainable, modern, equitable grants program that adequately funds Local Government emergency management activities across prevention, preparedness and response.

A modest annual increase in LGGGS operating grants of \$2.8 million will provide the 563 volunteer BFBs across the State with an extra \$5,000 annually to meet increased operational needs.

Together these measures will enable BFBs to attract and retain volunteers and meet the pressures and demands of more intense and frequent bushfires and other natural disasters.



# MORE COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGERS

The Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program bolsters Local Government's capacity to deliver and implement all-hazard preparedness, prevention, response and recovery (PPRR) services to their communities. The Program is partially funded by the ESL.

CESMs are a particularly valuable resource for smaller regional Local Governments with responsibility for volunteer BFBs that lack the financial resources to sustain a dedicated emergency management officer. WALGA's 2021 Emergency Management Survey indicated that Local Governments value the CESM Program and that those with a CESM felt more confident in managing their volunteer BFBs.

There are currently 34 CESMs working across 57 Local Governments, with some employed by DFES and the remainder employed by Local Governments under varying cost sharing arrangements with DFES. Some Local Governments share a CESM. A further 24 Local Governments also responded that they wanted to join the CESM Program.

WALGA is proposing that increased ESL funding be provided for the CESM Program to fully fund existing and additional CESMs and to ensure pay parity for all CESMs comprising:

- Approximately \$2.7 million per annum from 2024-25 to fully fund the cost of existing Local Government employed CESMs
- A two-stage expansion:
  - 27 positions for the remaining 54 Local Governments with responsibility for managing volunteer BFBs at a cost of approximately \$5.4 million per annum from 2024-25
  - 13 positions for the remaining 26 Local Governments to comprehensively address their PPRR roles and responsibilities at a cost of \$2.6 million per annum from 2025-26.

The ongoing annual cost of the CESM Program from 2025-26 is estimated at approximately \$14.9 million.

**Expand the Community Emergency Services Manager to all Local Governments to bolster local emergency management capability across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

### ADDITIONAL

# \$2.7 million per annum

from 2024-25 to fully fund the cost of existing Local Government employed CESMs

### A staged approach to increasing the number of CESMs:

- **STAGE 1** – approximately \$5.4 million additional per annum from 2024-25 to fully fund an additional 27 CESMs for Local Governments that manage volunteer BFBs.
- **STAGE 2** – A further \$2.6 million per annum from 2025-26 to fully fund an additional 13 CESMs for other interested Local Governments that do not manage volunteer BFBs.

The estimated total cost of the CESM Program once fully subscribed is approximately \$14.9 million per annum. This should be fully funded from ESL revenue.



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Local Governments and their communities are supported across the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery phases of emergency management
- Better access to training and administrative support for volunteer BFBs
- Enhanced emergency management capability, skills and knowledge in the Local Government sector
- More effective emergency management coordination and collaboration between State and Local Government, BFBs and the community



# EXPAND MITIGATION WORKS IN AREAS OF HIGH BUSHFIRE RISK

Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of bushfires in WA as well as the length of both the southern and northern bushfire season. As fire suppression becomes more challenging due to more hot, dry and windy conditions, prevention through bushfire risk mitigation is more important than ever to keep communities and firefighters safe.

Under the *State Hazard Plan – Fire*, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner has overall responsibility for the prevention and mitigation of bushfire risk, with responsibility for property fire prevention and mitigation belonging to the owner / occupier of the property. Local Governments have a supporting role in preventing and mitigating bushfire risk. Risk reduction is increasingly acknowledged as essential to reduce the costs of recovery, both financial and on community well-being.

The Mitigation Activity Fund (MAF) Grants Program enables Local Governments with an endorsed Bushfire Risk Mitigation Plan (BRMP) to undertake physical mitigation works on Crown land that they manage on behalf of the State. Since 2017-18, DFES has allocated approximately \$48 million in mitigation funding to 70 Local Governments to conduct over 6000 mitigation treatments.

The MAF Program is strongly supported by Local Governments, due to its benefits in improving community safety and the outcomes of bushfire response. Supported activities include building fire breaks, reducing fuel loads and carrying out hazard reduction burns. Without the MAF Program, Local Governments would be unable to effectively mitigate bushfire risk on Crown Land under their management. The MAF Program also helps to facilitate an integrated approach to bushfire risk management across all land tenures, complementing the work that is done by State Government and private property owners to mitigate bushfire risk.

There is growing pressure on the MAF Program, as the number of Local Governments with an endorsed BRMP increases. Local Governments with an endorsed BRMP have more than doubled from 35 in 2019 to 74 in 2023 and this is set to grow further, with a total of 94 Local Governments currently participating in the BRMP program.

**Increase funding and expand the scope of the Mitigation Activity Fund Grants Program to include all bushfire risk reduction activities**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$15 million per annum**

from 2024-25

**Expansion** to include community education and resilience building in areas of high bushfire risk, bushfire risk management planning and assets to build local capacity for mitigation work



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- More effective bushfire risk mitigation in areas of high risk and low capacity for mitigation work
- More Local Governments supported to undertake a broader range of bushfire risk mitigation activities
- Reduced risk and enhanced community preparedness and resilience to bushfire across more of WA
- Safer fire-fighting operations and safer volunteers
- Better collaboration between key stakeholders in management of bushfire risk



*IMAGE CREDIT: DFES Incident Photographer Morten Boe*

Additionally, it is becoming increasingly difficult to implement critical mitigation treatments in some regional and remote areas due to limited access to contractors and machinery, smaller weather windows for mitigation work to occur and multiple demands on BFB volunteers' time.

The MAF Program should also be expanded beyond physical mitigation works to include additional activities that support

physical mitigation, including educating private property owners on risk and responsibility, building community resilience, developing and implementing BRMPs, and supporting purchase of assets required to undertake mitigation works. This expanded scope will support a comprehensive, long-term approach to risk reduction and reduce the costs of recovery.

# MORE EFFECTIVE LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, WA Local Governments must develop and maintain Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA). Results from WALGA’s 2021 Local Government Emergency Management Survey<sup>26</sup> and the 2022 LEMA Review Consultation<sup>27</sup> indicate that many Local Governments lack the capacity for effective LEMA maintenance. The 2021 State Capability Survey confirms that emergency management capability declines with smaller Local Governments and increased remoteness.<sup>28</sup>

A review of LEMA, with input from 100 Local Governments and State Hazard Management Agencies, confirms the need for LEMA system reform and ongoing support for Local Governments in preparing for and responding to emergencies.

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) has endorsed a five-year implementation plan for LEMA reform, however this is currently unfunded. Implementing LEMA improvement actions aligns with SEMC’s 2022-2025 objective to enhance community resilience through local emergency management. \$1 million per annum over five years is needed to implement the LEMA Improvement Plan.

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

The only State Government funding available to Local Governments to assist emergency planning and preparedness is through the *All West Australians Reducing Emergencies (AWARE)* competitive grant program. Funding for this program (\$238,000 per year) has not increased since its establishment in 2014. The program has restrictive application criteria and low project funding limits and the cash or in-kind contributions required excludes many Local Governments.

**Implement the Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan and provide funding to Local Governments for emergency management planning to build community disaster resilience**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$1 million per annum**

for five years from 2024-25 to fund the implementation of the State Emergency Management Committee endorsed Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan

**\$9 million per annum**

from 2024-25 to replace the AWARE Competitive Grants Program with an enhanced program to support Local Government emergency management, including an expanded scope of eligible activities, increased funding caps and flexibility for Local Governments to allocate resources according to their capacity, risk profile and need



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Reduced disaster risks and vulnerabilities across the State through enhanced preparedness and planning
- Local Governments are well placed to fulfil the emergency management obligations delegated to them by the State Government
- More resilient Western Australian communities





IMAGE CREDIT: Picture supplied by DFES

Other jurisdictions recognise the importance of assisting Local Governments in fulfilling their emergency management obligations. Victoria, which has a comparable Local Government emergency management planning system, allocates \$4.89 million annually, with eligible Councils able to access funding at four levels (\$40,000, \$60,000, \$80,000, or \$120,000 per year) based on their capacity and emergency risk profile.<sup>29</sup>

Replacing the AWARE Competitive Grant Program with an enhanced program that sustainably supports Local Government emergency management would provide the additional capacity needed to keep communities safe.



# BUILD BACK BETTER ESSENTIAL PUBLIC ASSETS

Increased frequency and severity of disasters are a key impact of climate change. Natural disasters are currently estimated to cost the Australian economy \$38 billion per year and are expected to rise to \$73 billion annually by 2060.

Investing in resilience is an effective mechanism to reduce these costs.<sup>30</sup> Evidence from Queensland, where 531 betterment projects have been completed since 2013, unequivocally demonstrates the cost savings and community benefits of betterment funding. From an investment of \$174 million in betterment over 10 years, there has been \$397.5 million in avoided reconstruction costs, with 81% of betterment projects subsequently re-impacted by a disaster suffering no damage, or only minor damage.<sup>31</sup>

The importance of betterment funding was recognised in the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, with Recommendation 22.6 providing that *Australian, State and Territory governments should incorporate the principle of 'build back better' more broadly into the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.*<sup>32</sup>

When a disaster is declared under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements WA (DRFAWA), Local Governments become eligible for funding for emergency works and reconstruction of impacted public assets. However current funding is provided on a like-for-like basis only with no additional funding available to reconstruct essential assets in a way that improves their resilience to future disasters, for example to upgrade road floodways to a cement stabilised standard in line with the Main Roads Specification. This means that vulnerable infrastructure can be repeatedly impacted by subsequent disasters.

Since 2020 there have been 32 declared disasters impacting 77 of 139 WA Local Governments. More than \$39 million was invested in reconstruction of essential public assets through Category B of the DRFAWA in 2022-23 alone.

The WA State Government has recognised the need to invest in disaster recovery in its 2023-24 budget, with \$24.4 million announced to permanently appoint 29 dedicated disaster recovery officers to form WA's largest ever recovery team.<sup>33</sup> A reserve fund for resilient reconstruction would enable the State to value add to the DRFA investment by supporting Local Governments to rebuild essential public assets to a more resilient standard. It would also create opportunities to leverage further investment in betterment from the Commonwealth Government through the DRFAWA.

Investment in resilient reconstruction will have significant benefits across WA, helping communities to better withstand

**Create a reserve fund for disaster resilient reconstruction of essential public assets following a natural disaster**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$10 million per annum**

from 2024-25 as a reserve fund for disaster resilient reconstruction of impacted essential public assets



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- More disaster resilient essential public assets
- Reduced long term infrastructure recovery costs
- Reduced impact on communities and faster recovery from natural disasters

and recover from disasters and reducing the long-term costs to Local, State and Commonwealth Governments and represent a step-change in the State's approach to investing in disaster risk reduction.

This could be further reinforced in future budgets through the establishment of an efficiencies framework such as that adopted in Queensland which would enable the variance between the actual cost of a reconstruction project and its estimated cost, when the actual cost is lower, to be reinvested in future betterment projects.

# IMPROVE ROAD ACCESS IN BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

93% of the State is identified as bushfire prone. New development proposals in these areas are required to address the bush fire planning framework.

Significant portions of the peri-urban areas of Perth and regional centres were constructed prior to *State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas* (SPP3.7) being implemented in 2015. Many of these areas are typified by long cul-de-sacs adjoining high risk vegetation and are unable to meet the current requirements for road access in the bushfire planning framework.

SPP 3.7 and the Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas Guidelines (the Guidelines) require planning decision makers to be satisfied that a proposal adequately identifies that the local vehicle network allows for the community to evacuate to a suitable destination before a bushfire impacts the site, while allowing emergency services personnel access to attend the site/hazard.

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) has initiated a secondary vehicle access in bushfire prone areas project that will provide Local Government with guidance in the identification of no-through roads and prioritisation of future works. This includes a desktop assessment of one-way access routes in developed bushfire prone areas across the Perth, Peel and Greater Bunbury region scheme areas.

The mapping of areas with one-way access routes and the development of a strategy for assessment by Local Government will help quantify the location and number of lots at risk, and options for prioritising and addressing the risk.

While some risk treatment options will be possible through minor action, such as changing access arrangements over unmade road reserves, there will be situations where considerable works, or land acquisition may be required to address the risk. Where access through public land, land acquisition or significant capital works are required, support from the State in delivering these solutions is necessary and appropriate.

Additional funding assistance will support Local Governments that have identified that complex solutions are the preferred or only option to address one-way access arrangements in high-risk locations.

**Address existing high-risk road access in bush fire prone areas to improve community safety in line with the requirements of the State Bushfire Planning Framework**



**FUNDING REQUIRED**

**\$10 million**

between 2024-25 and 2027-28 to establish an open funding pool to enable Local Governments to improve road access arrangements in bushfire prone areas



**PROGRAM BENEFITS**

- Improved community safety in high-risk areas
- Improved emergency services access
- Support risk-based prioritisation of projects



# 6

## ADDRESS GAPS IN SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES





# RENEW OUR LIBRARIES

Public libraries have benefits extending well beyond the provision of books. The modern public library is an important community hub, promoting social cohesion, wellbeing and knowledge.

As a vital part of the social infrastructure landscape, public libraries support literacy in young children, continue to bridge the digital divide and provide a safe space for many vulnerable members of the community to meet and find assistance.<sup>34</sup> Libraries provide free services to the community at a time when the cost of living presents a major challenge for many Western Australians.

WA's 232 public libraries have more than 637,000 active members. In 2021-22, members borrowed just under 11 million physical items and over 3.4 million digital items<sup>35</sup> and there were 7.6 million individual library visits<sup>36</sup>, the equivalent of three visits for every Western Australian.

Public library services in WA are delivered through a partnership between the State Government and Local Governments. Local Governments provide library infrastructure, including buildings and technology, staff, and operating costs, while the Library Board, through the State Library of Western Australia, allocates funds for public library stock including books and e-resources.

*The State Library of Western Australia Strategic Plan 2023-2027*<sup>37</sup> Priority area 3 is to champion the essential role of local public libraries in our communities in supporting innovation and providing a sense of belonging, through partnering with Local Government to deliver free, equitable and contemporary public library services that are responsive to community needs, support public libraries to deliver literacy and digital inclusion programs, and advocate for public libraries as an essential public asset.

Ageing public library infrastructure throughout the State has also reduced many libraries' capacity to deliver the necessary digital improvements to meet the State Government's *Digital Strategy for the Western Australian Government 2021-2025*, which calls for every public library in WA to have appropriate digital infrastructure and connectivity to provide universal access for all communities. There is currently no dedicated funding to implement this Strategy.

The State's *Digital Inclusion in WA Blueprint (2022)* acknowledges that many public libraries already deliver digital inclusion programs but require more resources to sustain this delivery.<sup>38</sup>

The State and Local Government sectors recognise that there is a need for significant change to deliver more efficient and flexible public library services to continue to meet our growing and diverse community needs.<sup>39</sup>

**Ensure the sustainable funding of public libraries to deliver service levels that meet community need, and to support the implementation of the *WA Public Library Strategy 2022-2026***



## FUNDING REQUIRED

ADDITIONAL

**\$34 million**

- **\$30 million** over four years from 2024-25 to restore library funding to 2012-13 levels, including annual increases for inflation and population growth
- **\$4 million** in 2024-25 to implement the *WA Public Library Strategy 2022-26*



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Modern public library services that meet our growing and diverse community needs
- Support for learning, education, social cohesion and economic participation through digital inclusion
- Assist communities with the high cost of living through the provision of free services
- Equitable access to public libraries for all communities across our vast State





## RENEW OUR LIBRARIES CONTINUED

The Public Libraries Working Group leads this work on behalf of State and Local Government to “*deliver more agile and innovative public library services and programs that respond to the diverse needs of Western Australian communities and are sustainable into the future*”.

The *WA Public Library Strategy 2022-26* is the result of extensive research and consultation through the Public Libraries Working Group and with stakeholders including Local Government and the community. This strategy focuses on three pillars: strengthening communities, promoting digital inclusion, and valuing libraries as essential community assets.<sup>40</sup>

However, there is currently no dedicated funding to support Strategy implementation. The Strategy sets out a clear vision for innovative and responsive library services and programs, which cannot be achieved without dedicated funding for both State and Local Governments. WALGA advocates for \$4 million per annum over four years from 2024-25 to enable the State Library to implement the Strategy in alignment with the actions already identified by the Public Library Working Group.

In the ten years to 2022-23, State Government public library funding has increased by a mere 4% from \$16.3 million to \$16.9 million. At the same time, the population of Western Australia has increased by 15% and the Consumer Price Index has increased by 28%. To provide the same per capita level of support to public libraries as a decade ago, funding through the State budget in 2023-24 would have needed to be \$6.6 million higher than the amount allocated. It is estimated that annual increases for CPI and population growth would require approximately \$30 million over four years to restore funding to previous levels and maintain service levels through the forward estimates.

Although the partnership arrangements between the State and Local Government provide for the State to provide library collections, Local Governments are increasingly funding collections to provide the level of service expected by the community. The sector is contributing \$3 million in additional funding for print resources and \$1.4 million in additional funding for e-resources in 2021-22.

Funding for public libraries’ print resources and e-resources in WA also lags behind other states. In 2021-22 expenditure for print resources in WA was only \$3.5 per capita, behind other states such as Queensland (\$4.3), South Australia (\$4.5) and Victoria (\$5.9).<sup>41</sup>

One area which has driven higher costs for Local Governments has been the use of e-resources, which has more than doubled since 2016-17. In 2021-22, 3.4 million e-resources were borrowed, with an average cost of \$26.15 per e-book and \$80.38 per audiobook. The majority of these e-resource licences expire after one year, requiring re-purchasing by public libraries.

Expenditure on e-resources in WA in 2021-22 was lower than comparable States, at only \$1.2 per capita compared to \$1.7 per capita in Victoria and \$1.8 in Queensland.<sup>42</sup> This includes a contribution of \$1.4 million in 2021-22 from WA Local Governments to try and keep up with rapidly increasing demand.

Enhanced State funding will ensure the equitable delivery of agile, innovative and sustainable public library services that respond to local community need all across WA, and enable Local Governments to shift their focus from funding the gap in library stock provision to focus on their core responsibility of funding library operating costs.

# ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTH SERVICES IN REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

The Commonwealth and State Government are failing in their responsibility to ensure the adequate provision of primary health services in many regional and remote parts of WA.

Poor access to health services means that those living in outer-metropolitan, regional and rural locations face increased costs, reduced quality of care and worse health outcomes compared to metropolitan areas.

Local Governments are reluctantly stepping in to subsidise the provision of healthcare services for their communities, including funding accommodation, vehicles and medical centre operations. WALGA's recent Local Government Primary Health Services survey found that 53% of non-metropolitan respondents were supporting one or more primary healthcare services for their communities in 2021-22, at a cost of \$7.8 million.<sup>43</sup>

This is placing pressure on Local Government resources and diverting funding away from the provision of other essential community services and infrastructure. Local Governments cannot continue to bear this cost.

The Commonwealth and State Government need to do more to address systemic issues in the provision of regional health services in the regions, and develop and fund innovative solutions. As a first step WALGA proposes the Commonwealth and State Government convene a consultative committee of key stakeholders, including Local Government, focussed to focus on:

- Addressing critical healthcare workforce shortages
- Managing the health challenges posed by ageing populations and chronic illnesses
- Innovation in service provision
- Developing appropriate funding mechanisms and levels for healthcare service provision.

Until these systemic issues are addressed, regional Local Governments need to be compensated for the funding support they are providing for primary health services in their communities. A primary healthcare funding program would assist to offset the costs incurred by Local Government in securing essential primary healthcare services for their communities.

**Establish a Local Government Primary Healthcare funding program to assist with the costs incurred by rural and regional Local Governments to secure and support the delivery of essential primary health services for their local communities.**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$5 million per annum**  
from 2024-25



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Sustainable and equitable access to primary healthcare services for local communities
- Reduced hospital pressures and costs
- Collaborative and joined up policy responses to primary healthcare provision across all tiers of Government

# ADDRESS WORKFORCE SHORTAGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Like other sectors of the WA economy, skills shortages are a key issue facing Local Governments. Overcoming these shortages will be essential to ensure that Local Governments can efficiently perform important planning and regulatory functions to protect the wellbeing of the WA community.

Planners, building surveyors and Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) were identified in the 2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey to be critical Local Government occupations and amongst the hardest to fill in WA. The Jobs and Skills Australia 2023 Skills Priority List also identifies town planners and EHOs as experiencing regional shortages and building surveyors experiencing a general shortage in WA.

The Department of Training and Workforce and Development's State Priority Occupation List 2022 identifies both town planners and 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 people to the professions. These trends are expected to continue for at least the next few years.

A WALGA survey of Local Government building surveyors showed that 55% planned to leave the industry in the next five years. Most of the remaining building surveyors are either unregistered cadets or registered at a level requiring supervision so the lack of experienced practitioners available will impact future training efforts.

EHOs have been identified as a Priority 2 on the State Priority Occupation List.

The shortage of these professions has significant implications for Local Governments' capacity to deliver important services to their local communities, as well as meet statutory obligations. It will also compromise the implementation of the State's building, planning and public health reform agendas in the years ahead including potentially inhibiting activity in the housing sector during the ongoing housing crisis. Environmental Health Australia has stated that the current shortage of EHOs is at a critical level and this shortage limits the ability of the health system to adequately respond to public health emergencies.<sup>44</sup>

The shortages of these key skills are not limited to WA but are being experienced across Australia. As a result, other States have begun to act in response to these trends. For example:

**Creation of a dedicated Local Government training program for 110 town planning, building surveyor and environmental health officers (EHOs)**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$12.3 million**

from 2024-25 to 2027-28 to support education, training and professional development for key areas of skills shortage in Local Governments



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Ensure Local Governments have the skilled workforce necessary to provide timely services to support community and economic development
- Support activity in the construction sector as a key part of the State's response to the housing crisis
- Support the delivery of the State's building regulation and planning reform agendas





- 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, and all participants remained employed at the end of the program.<sup>45</sup>
- The New South Wales Government announced in May 2023 the Strong Start Cadetship Program to directly address NSW councils' planning workforce shortages and support them to employ new locally based planning cadets. The program includes \$1.85 million in grant funding and ongoing end-to-end support to encourage councils to onboard additional cadet planners and develop them into more senior roles, with a strong focus on regional areas where known shortages exist. The Program received high interest and was oversubscribed.<sup>46</sup>
- The South Australian Government in partnership with Local Government Association SA announced in September 2023 the *Grow Your Own* program focused on training local talent and providing pathways to grow regional Councils' planning workforce. The pilot program will enable participating Local Governments to support four employees – either from existing staff members or external hires – to become qualified planners.<sup>47</sup>

Funding of \$12.3 million over four years will support education, training and professional development for key areas of skills shortage in Local Governments in WA:

- \$6.5 million to provide \$75,000 a year for two years for 40 Local Government building surveyor positions to undertake an Advanced Diploma of Building Surveying or Bachelor of Building Surveying, paid work experience with Local Governments and other professional development.
- \$4.4 million to provide up to \$78,000 for at least 50 cadet Local Government planning officers to contribute up to \$18,000 towards university tuition or the cost of a Graduate Certificate in Development Planning (~\$5,000) and \$15,000 a year for up to four years for Local Governments towards the establishment of additional cadet planning officer positions.
- \$1.4 million to provide up to \$70,000 for at least 20 cadet Local Government EHOs to contribute up to \$10,000 towards university tuition or the cost of a Graduate Diploma in Environmental Health (~\$9,200) and \$15,000 a year for up to four years for Local Governments towards the establishment of additional cadet EHO positions.



# 7

## BETTER GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT



# OFFICE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR

The State 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 office and ideally report direct to the Minister for Local Government.

The Office of the Inspector would also oversee the behavioural complaint system relating to Elected Members and be able to appoint arbiters to Local Governments to investigate any behaviour issues. The cost of the arbiters is funded by the Local Government that is the source of the complaint. This is a similar system to the Victorian model.

Funding for the Office could be in part provided by reallocating existing resources that are provided for Local Government inquiries.

## Fund the establishment of a Chief Inspector of Local Government and Office of the Local Government Inspector



### FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$3.5 million per year**

to create an office of approximately 14 FTE staff, including accommodation and travel costs.



### PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Smooth implementation of the Local Government legislative reform initiative on Early Intervention and Effective Regulation
- Early intervention and capacity building assistance to the Local Government sector
- Save time and money on the current lengthy Local Government inquiries and assist in raising the capacity and reputation of the Local Government sector

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT BODY

Local Governments undertake many activities that intersect with children including through service provision and the management of infrastructure and facilities used by children including libraries, playgrounds and sporting infrastructure, recreational facilities.

Local Governments are uniquely placed to demonstrate leadership in the community with respect to supporting others to be Child Safe Organisations and to protect children and young people from harm. To play this vital role however, Local Governments require capacity building support, guidance and funding.

The responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) is shared across all levels of Government and all organisations working with children. The State Government has committed to addressing the findings of the Royal Commission<sup>48</sup> and has established the Child Safeguarding Implementation Unit (Implementation Unit) within the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) to support and build capability in Local Government, arts, cultural, sport and recreation organisations to embed child safe practices.

While the establishment of the Implementation Unit within DLGSC is encouraging, further work is required to provide a whole of government approach to supporting the development of child safe organisations across WA.

The State Government has taken the approach of developing initiatives to progress the Royal Commission recommendations on a sector-by-sector basis. Examples include the funding of the SportsWest True Sport Child Safeguarding Initiative training<sup>49</sup>, and the \$300,000 funding to the Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS) WA Child Safe Project targeted at community organisations.<sup>50</sup>

For Local Government, the Child Safe Awareness Policy Template for Local Government has been developed.<sup>51</sup> The policy aims to assist implementation of Recommendation 6.12 of the Royal Commission regarding Child Safety Officers in Local Government. The policy template provides a framework to guide Local Governments developing child safe policies, however further support is required to translate the policy into practice.

**Prioritise the establishment of a Child Safeguarding Independent Oversight Body to oversee and support the implementation of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**



## FUNDING REQUIRED

**\$2 million per annum**  
from 2024-25



## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Oversight of progress on the WA response to the Royal Commission recommendations across the whole of government
- Support capacity building for a consistent whole of community response to child safeguarding
- Enhanced child safety resulting from independent oversight of organisations engaged in child-related work



In December 2022 WALGA surveyed Local Governments with respect to their progress with child safeguarding, and 59% of respondents identified a need to access training resources or funding support in order to implement child safeguarding initiatives. An additional 15% of respondents sought clarity on Local Governments' roles and responsibilities with respect to child safeguarding.

Local Governments are committed to implementing the National Principles and supporting local organisations to do so. Limited resources and knowledge impact the sector's ability to achieve this outcome, particularly smaller, less well-resourced Local Governments.

The Royal Commission recommended that organisations engaged in child-related work be overseen by an independent body to improve their child safe systems and practices and handling of child abuse complaints. WALGA considers this should be progressed as a priority in the 2024-25 Budget.

The establishment of an Independent Oversight Body would oversee and support improvements in child safe cultures and

practices across organisations in WA. As seen in New South Wales, an Independent Oversight Body also has the potential to provide not only compliance processes, but consistent capacity building support for organisations across all sectors to become Child Safe. The Queensland Government is also proposing to establish an integrated child safe organisations system, integrated into the role of a single, independent oversight body.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has consulted on the development of a system independent oversight in 2021 and again in 2022. No output or action from the consultation has been provided to date.

With financial, resourcing and capacity building support from the Independent Oversight Body, Local Governments would be supported to build capacity and capability to implement and embed child safeguarding across their functions and further support community organisations to become Child Safe.



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# Astrotourism Towns Project

Update December 2023

Since the Total Solar Eclipse Discovery Tour events in April, several new projects have been initiated. These are assisting in the development and promotion of dark sky tourism in the Astrotourism Towns network and are summarised below.

Also included with this report is some data analysis from the Astrotourism WA website and social media Facebook platform.

## **North Metropolitan TAFE Project**

Students studying Travel and Tourism at Perth's North Metropolitan TAFE worked with five Astrotourism Towns to develop innovative visitor dark sky tourism holiday packages. The Local Governments participating were:

- Shire of Dandaragan;
- Shire of Morawa;
- Shire of Shark Bay;
- Shire of Upper Gascoyne; and
- Shire of Wickelpin

This is the third year of this project which leverages WA's world-class dark night sky to grow local tourism economies, foster collaborative marketing, and develop new products to drive visitation to the regions.

A media statement was released on 16 November 2023. The story was picked up by Perth Now.

## **Astrofest 2023 Astrophotography Exhibition and Competition**

The Astrofest Astrophotography Exhibition has a circular promotional effect. It encourages astrophotographers to travel to Astrotourism Town destinations to take images and enter the competition. This in turn, inspires other astrophotographers to travel to the same locations to take their own images.

The Astrotourism WA Best Nightscape Award of the Astrofest 2023 Astrophotography Exhibition and Competition was sponsored by the Shire of Upper Gascoyne and the Shire of Perenjori. A total of 37 images were entered into the Astrotourism WA Best Nightscape Award (approximately 19% of all nightscape images entered overall).

Carol Redford  
Founder | CEO  
0427 554 035

[stars@astrotourismwa.com.au](mailto:stars@astrotourismwa.com.au)  
[www.astrotourismwa.com.au](http://www.astrotourismwa.com.au)



The 2023 competition had entries from the following Astrotourism Towns:

<b>Number of Entries 2023</b>	<b>Astrotourism Town</b>
1	Shire of Ashburton
4	Shire of Carnarvon
4	Shire of Chittering
8	Shire of Dandaragan
7	Shire of Morawa
5	Shire of Northam
1	Shire of Perenjori
1	Shire of Three Springs
3	Shire of Upper Gascoyne
3	Shire of Wongan-Ballidu

The winner of the Best Astrotourism WA Nightscape Award was Virat Shah for his image entitled “Desert Dreams”. Trevor Dobson was runner up with “Sentinels of the Stars”. Both the winner and runner up images were taken in the Shire of Dandaragan.

The 2023 Best Astrotourism Towns Nightscape Award – Winner was sponsored by the Shire of Upper Gascoyne. The prize comprised:

- Two nights accommodation at the Gascoyne Junction Pub and Tourist Park in a 1 Bedroom Self Contained Unit plus a \$75 Gift Voucher to spend at the Gascoyne Junction Pub and Tourist Park Restaurant; and
- One night accommodation at the Mount Augustus Tourist Park in a Self Contained Unit plus a \$75 Gift Voucher at the Mount View Dining Room.
- Total value: \$628

The 2023 Best Astrotourism Towns Nightscape Award – Runner-up, was sponsored by the Shire of Perenjori. The prize comprised:

- Two nights accommodation at the Perenjori Caravan Park in a Chalet, plus a voucher of \$100 to spend at the Perenjori Hotel.
- Total value: \$370

The trophies for the winner and runner-up were sponsored by Astrotourism WA.

### **Dark Sky Friendlier LED Streetlight Project**

Astrotourism WA is pursuing a better street light to protect WA’s dark night sky for the Tourism Industry and to unlock the opportunities for our towns to apply for International Dark Sky Accreditation.

Over the last six months Astrotourism WA has been meeting with Tristan Simpson, Senior Environmental Officer at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), who is also pursuing the same initiative for their North West Shelf Flatback Turtle Conservation Program.

If we prove demand for such a streetlight to Western Power, DBCA will fund the design of the streetlight that will meet Australian Standards, meet International Dark Sky Community accreditation criteria, fit with existing infrastructure, and have negligible impact on the street light tariffs paid by Local Government.

The list of support letters received so far are from:

- City of Cockburn
- Shire of Augusta Margaret River
- Shire of Chittering
- Shire of Dandaragan
- Shire of Menzies
- Shire of Mingenew
- Shire of Mundaring
- Shire of Perenjori
- Shire of Shark Bay
- Shire of Three Springs
- Shire of Upper Gascoyne
- Shire of West Arthur

The project flyer is attached as Appendix 1 at the end of this report and a template letter of support is available if required.

### **Western Power Streetlighting Public Consultation 2024**

The Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) has asked Western Power to conduct a public consultation on street lighting in the first half of 2024. There will be an opportunity for the Astrotourism Towns to provide submissions. Astrotourism WA will alert the network when submissions open and will also supply template information to advocate for the right type of streetlight design that improves the night time environment and still preserves safety.

### **Dark Sky Tourism Experience Development**

Astrotourism WA welcomes the opportunity to work with your tourism operators should they wish to provide dark sky experiences for guests and visitors. Please ask them to contact Carol Redford at [carol@astrotourismwa.com.au](mailto:carol@astrotourismwa.com.au) or 0427 554 035 if you hear of any interest.

When required, Astrotourism WA continues to assist the following tourism operators to develop their skills and competency to provide stargazing and astronomy experiences for their clients and visitors:

- Jurien Bay Adventure Tours, Shire of Dandaragan
- Madeline Andreson, Yued Astrotourism Guide, Shire of Dandaragan and Shire of Chittering
- One Gate Farm, Shire of West Arthur
- Wooramulla Eco Cultural Journeys, Shire of Carnarvon and Shire of Upper Gascoyne
- Gwoonwardu Mia Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre, Shire of Carnarvon
- Carnarvon Space and Technology Museum, Shire of Carnarvon

- Cheela Plains Station Stay, Shire of Ashburton
- Telescope for hire, Shire of Mingenew
- Barna Mia Nocturnal Wildlife Experience, Shire of Narrogin
- Hamlin Station Stay, Shire of Shark Bay

## **Dark Hotels**

Accommodation providers that list properties on [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) can now elect to be shown on the new Dark Hotels map, <https://darkhotels.co/>. This new map overlays light pollution with the location of accommodation which assists the dark sky traveller determine the best location for astronomy and stargazing activities.

## **Dark Sky Tourism Signage**

The “Giant Planisphere” and “Stargazing for Beginners” signage continue to be installed in Astrotourism Towns. The “Giant Planisphere” sign is an interactive tool to assist visitors find out what’s up in the night sky and the “Stargazing for Beginners” sign gives tips on how to make the best of an astronomy experience. New signs are due to be installed in:

- Shire of Ashburton
- Shire of Shark Bay; and
- Shire of Upper Gascoyne

Signs are already located in the Shires of Lake Grace, Mingenew, Narembeen, Narrogin and Perenjori. Trail marker signage is also installed in the Shire of West Arthur.

## **National Sustainability Framework for the Visitor Economy**

By being part of the Astrotourism Towns Project, you are meeting some of the goals of the recently released [National Sustainability Framework for the Visitor Economy](#).

Below are some brief outlines of how Astrotourism Towns are meeting these goals. These can be expanded with associated research to strengthen grant applications if required.

### **Pillar 2 Environmental and climate action:**

- Goal 4: Conserving and contributing to biodiversity, including by protecting our World Heritage areas, and native fauna and flora.

By reducing artificial light pollution for dark sky tourism initiatives, you’re contributing to the protection of the night time environment which includes native fauna.

- Goal 5: Shaping responsible visitor behaviour through storytelling and education and, where appropriate, regenerative practices.

You’re engaging with dark sky tourism visitors to educate them about the night time environment and encouraging them to turn out lights for improved stargazing experiences.

### **Pillar 3 Respecting culture**

- Goal 1: Protecting and preserving cultural assets consistent with principles of self-determination, values and traditions including World Heritage areas, natural sites of significance, buildings of cultural and historical importance, and traditions that make a community distinct.

The night sky is a valuable cultural asset. By being part of the Astrotourism towns Project, you're protecting and preserving values and traditions linked to the night sky stars.

- Goal 4: Embedding sustainable building design practices that are sensitive to cultural heritage and the local environment.

Communities on the Astrotourism Towns map have been using the Department of Planning's Dark Sky and Astrotourism Position Statement to guide lighting designs for new buildings and/or facilities.

### **Pillar 4 Creating positive social impact**

- Goal 1: Creating economic opportunity through jobs and increased business for local communities.

One of the aims of the Astrotourism Towns Project is to encourage new or existing tourism operators to provide dark sky experiences for visitors and thereby increase revenue in our communities.

- Goal 2. Purchasing from and promoting local suppliers to support other businesses and grow regional economies.

As dark sky events and activities occur around meal time, we always encourage local suppliers to provide food and beverage which supports small business and/or not for profit organisations to grow the regional economy.

- Goal 5: Maintaining a social licence to operate through collaborative community engagement, and implementing visitor management strategies to reduce pressure on local communities.

Through community capacity building and STEM engagement with schools, regional students and residents are exposed to the science of astronomy and the awe-inspiring night sky. This has social benefits and demonstrates study and career pathways in science.

### **Recent Promotion**

Astrotourism WA aims to release monthly media statements on various activities in the Astrotourism Towns. This assist with promotion and below are some recent stories and interviews picked up by a variety of media channels.



01-Dec-23	Australasian Dark Sky Alliance eNews	<a href="#">Perth TAFE students take starring role in developing astrotourism in WA</a>
23-Nov-23	Perth Now	<a href="#">Perth TAFE students take starring role in developing astrotourism in WA</a>
18-Nov-23	Weekend Australian Travel and Luxury Liftout	<a href="#">Star Struck, into the orbit of astrotourism enthusiasts</a>
01-Nov-23	Astronomy Australia Almanac 2024	Advertisement for Astrotourism WA
24-Aug-23	Triple MMM	Shire of West Arthur/One Gate Farm Event (with Donna Vanzetti)
23-Aug-23	RDA Wheatbelt eNews	Astrotourism WA, Shire of West Arthur/One Gate Farm event, Shire of Chittering event, Shire of Northam event
09-Aug-23	Tourism WA Travel News	<a href="#">Spring Stargazing - West Arthur/One Gate Farm/Chittering Spring Fest events</a>
20-Jul-23	Radio 6PR	Carmen Wilson, Gascoyne Junction Remote Community School interviewed on Kids in Space Win
20-Jul-23	ABC Radio Pilbara - Kelly Gudgeon, Breakfast Presenter	Kids in Space Win - Gascoyne Junction Remote Community School space project competition and light pollution
16-Jul-23	Triple MMM Todd Gray	Next steps for Dark Sky Tourism in Mid West, Community Builders Workshop
07-Jul-23	RAC Horizon Magazine	<a href="#">More than just wildflowers</a>

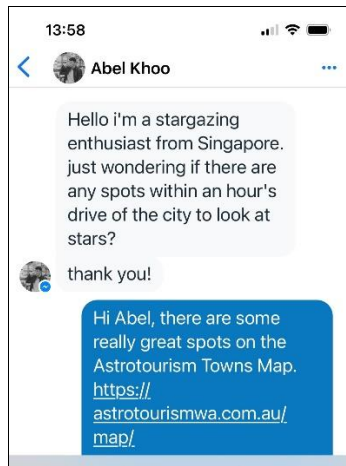
In addition to media releases, Astrotourism WA writes monthly stargazing columns for Have-A-Go-News, Northern Valleys Newspaper and the Astronomical Society of WA Sidereal Times. In addition, a quarterly column is written for the Western 4WDriver Magazine.

Carol Redford is interviewed every fortnight on Triple MMM Radio where she promotes the Astrotourism WA website, news and stargazing.

### **International Promotion**

Astrotourism WA has been back in touch with 161 astronomy clubs in the UK to promote the Astrotourism Towns Map to their members. The aim is to provide information to potential dark sky travellers. These groups will be contacted again in June 2024 to provide them with any information regarding the 2028 Total Solar Eclipse visible from WA.

Enquiries like the one below from Singaporean visitor, Abel Khoo, are starting to pop up from time to time. These were regular prior to the Covid pandemic and it's exciting to see this type of engagement beginning again.



Facebook message to Astrotourism WA received on 11 December 2023

## Dark Sky Tourism Events

Several events have been held recently in Astrotourism Towns. These include:

- 30 September, Onslow Staircase to the Moon Markets Stargazing, Shire of Ashburton
- 6-7 October: Narrogin Spring into Parks Wilman Country Stargazing Experience
- 4 November: Wongan Hills Stargazing and Ballardong Aboriginal Astronomy, (80 attendees)
- 23 September: One Gate Farm Stargazing & Aboriginal Astronomy (50 attendees)
- Private event, Shire of Northam

The theme of Aboriginal Astronomy resonates very strongly with audiences and is a highly sought after dark sky experience.

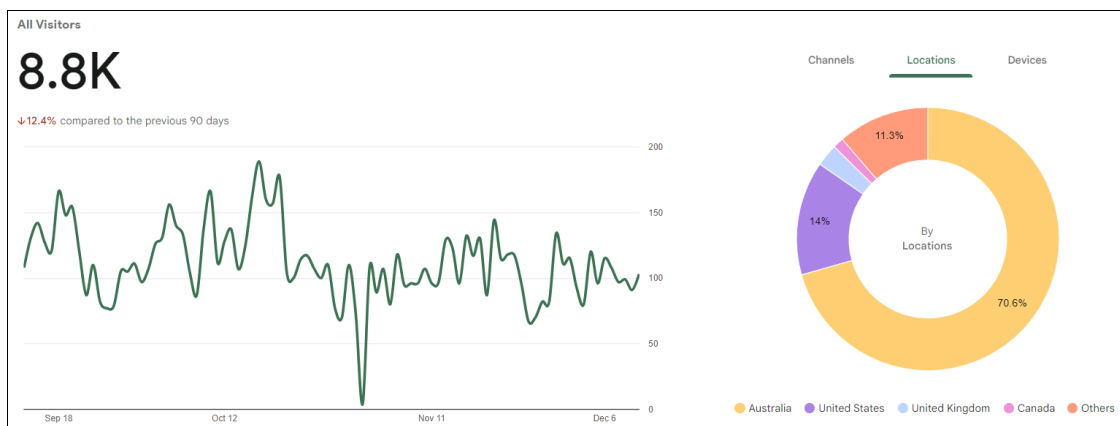
Upcoming events planned for 2024 include:

- 18 January: Northam School's Out Stargazing
- 22 March 2024: Three Springs Silo Movie Projection and Stargazing Night

## Astrotourism WA Website Analytics (September to December 2023)

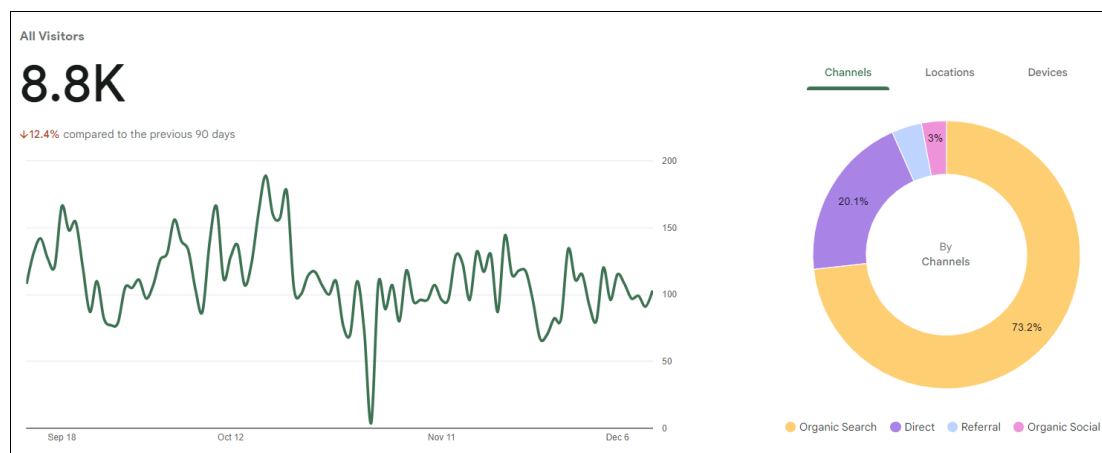
Visitors to the Astrotourism WA website by location of visitor

Please note the number of visitors from the USA and UK.



## Visitors to the Astrotourism WA website by channels

The primary way visitors find the website is via organic searching. This reflects the fact that there is no budget for paid advertising campaigns. However, one out of five visitors key in the website directly, which indicates that 20% of visitors find the website through brochures, other websites or promotional articles.



Please note the drop in website traffic on 1 November 2023 was caused by a server host error that took the website off line for approximately 2 days.

## Top search queries for Astrotourism WA

Top search queries for your site	Clicks	Impressions
1. <a href="#">emu in the sky</a>	143	3,890
2. <a href="#">astrotourism wa</a>	108	158
3. <a href="#">emu in the sky constellation</a>	93	597
4. <a href="#">southern cross stars australia</a>	90	471
5. <a href="#">astrofest</a>	67	2,983

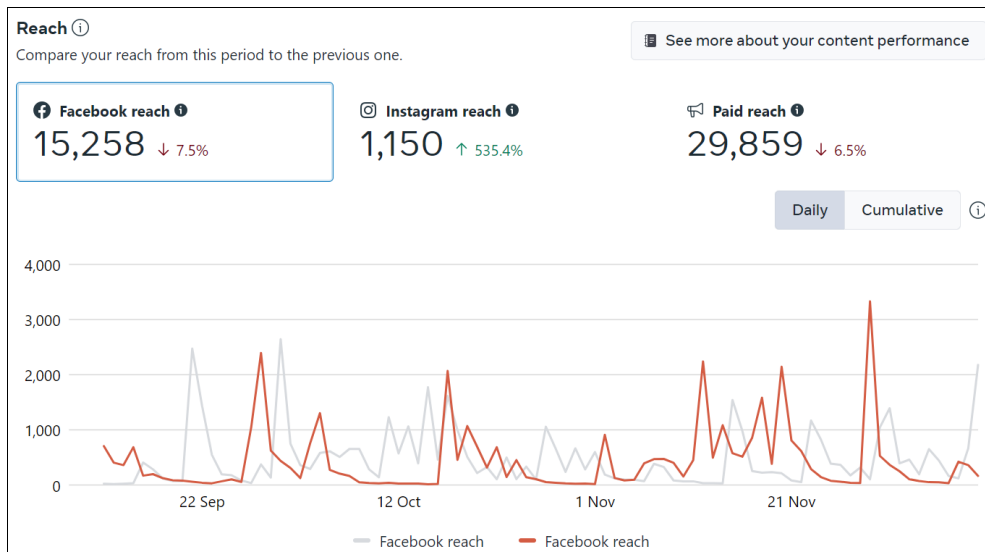
## Top content on the Astrotourism WA website

Home is the most frequently visited page of the website. Seven of the top 10 pages visited are stargazing related information. The [Astrotourism Towns map](#) is 6<sup>th</sup> most visited page and the [Astrotourism Towns page](#) is 8<sup>th</sup>.

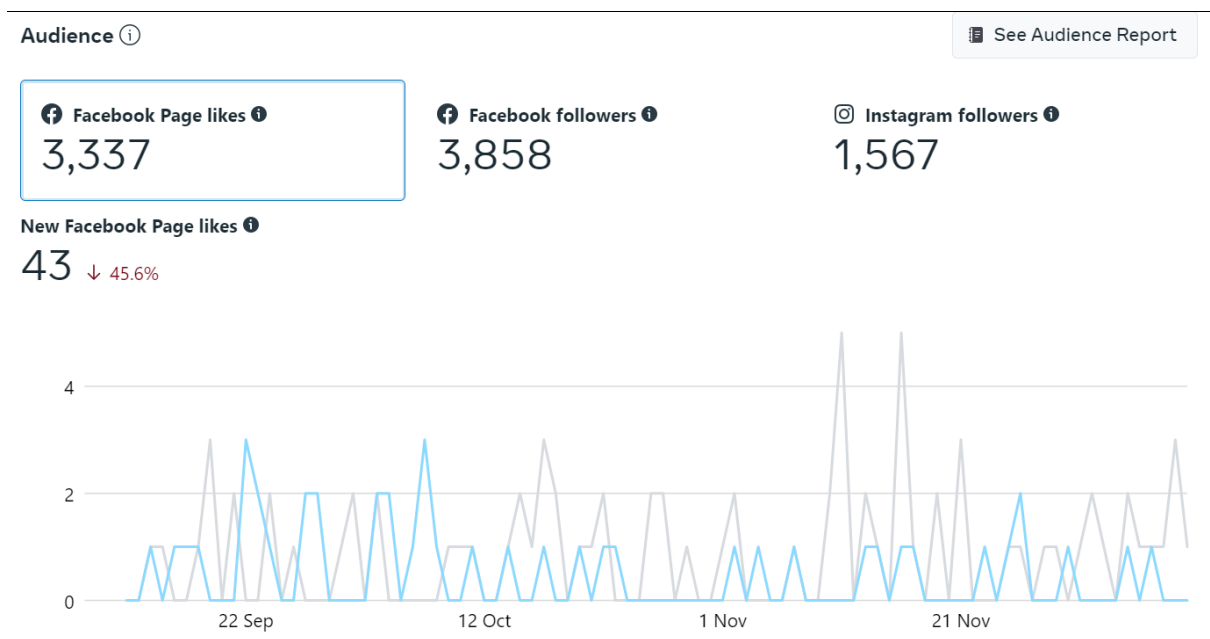
1. <a href="#">Stargazing in Western Australia   Places for Astrophotography &amp; Observing</a>	1,511	1,291	64.6%	1min. 11s.
2. <a href="#">Emu in the Sky   June   How to See it and Where to Look</a>	1,307	1,295	48.73%	1min. 45s.
3. <a href="#">Milky Way Galaxy   April to October   Have You Seen the Milky Way Under a Dark Sky?</a>	786	792	44.82%	1min. 25s.
4. <a href="#">Southern Cross   April   Australia's Favourite Constellation</a>	700	679	44.33%	1min. 17s.
5. <a href="#">Andromeda Galaxy   October - December   How to Find Our Largest Galactic Neighbour</a>	673	654	54.28%	1min. 32s.
6. <a href="#">Astrotourism Towns Western Australia   Sharing the night sky with you</a>	618	563	72.11%	1min. 18s.
7. <a href="#">Sagittarius   Can You Find the Teapot in the Sky?</a>	421	422	45.5%	1min. 58s.
8. <a href="#">Astrotourism Towns   Where to go Stargazing in Western Australia</a>	377	345	83.48%	1min. 43s.
9. <a href="#">What's Up in the Night Sky? Your Guide for Stargazing Western Australia</a>	370	315	93.02%	31s.
10. <a href="#">International Space Station   When and How to See the ISS</a>	362	350	50.57%	51s.

# Astrotourism WA Facebook Analytics (September to December 2023)

*Reach (the number of people who saw posts at least once)*



*Audience (number of people liking and following)*





# Appendix 1



## Marine Turtles Western Australia

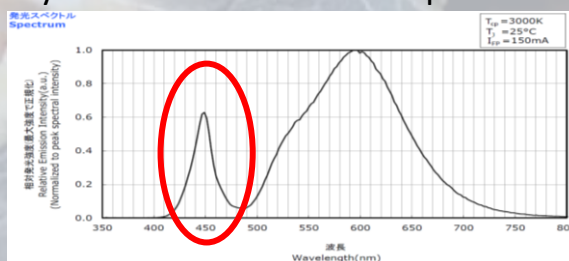
North West Shelf Flatback Turtle  
Conservation Program

# Seeking Formal Support of Local Governments

**For the development of a dark sky and wildlife friendlier LED streetlight luminaire for Local Governments to be able to choose as an installation option from Western Australian power companies where appropriate.**

### Background:

- Western Power is responsible for the procurement and purchasing of streetlights for the State, including those for Horizon Power.
- In some Western Australian communities, Western Power and Horizon Power are installing 3000K or 4000K LED streetlights.
- These LED streetlights have environmental benefits, including a reduced carbon footprint from lower energy usage and lower maintenance needs.
- However, improvements can be made to the lighting design to reduce the impacts to the nighttime environment and wildlife. Below is the spectral power distribution curve on a current 3000K streetlight showing a blue light spike that is detrimental to many native and threatened species and the dark night sky.\*



- DBCA and Astrotourism WA will propose to Western Power that an additional dark sky and wildlife friendlier LED streetlight luminaire option be added to the existing catalogue for selection to install by Local Governments.

### Comments:

- Western Power has confirmed its provisional support for this initiative pending demonstrated and formal confirmation from a representative proportion of Western Australia's Local Governments.

\* Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 2023, National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife, Commonwealth of Australia, accessed 10 August 2023

(<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-light-pollution-guidelines-wildlife.pdf>)



## Marine Turtles Western Australia

North West Shelf Flatback Turtle  
Conservation Program

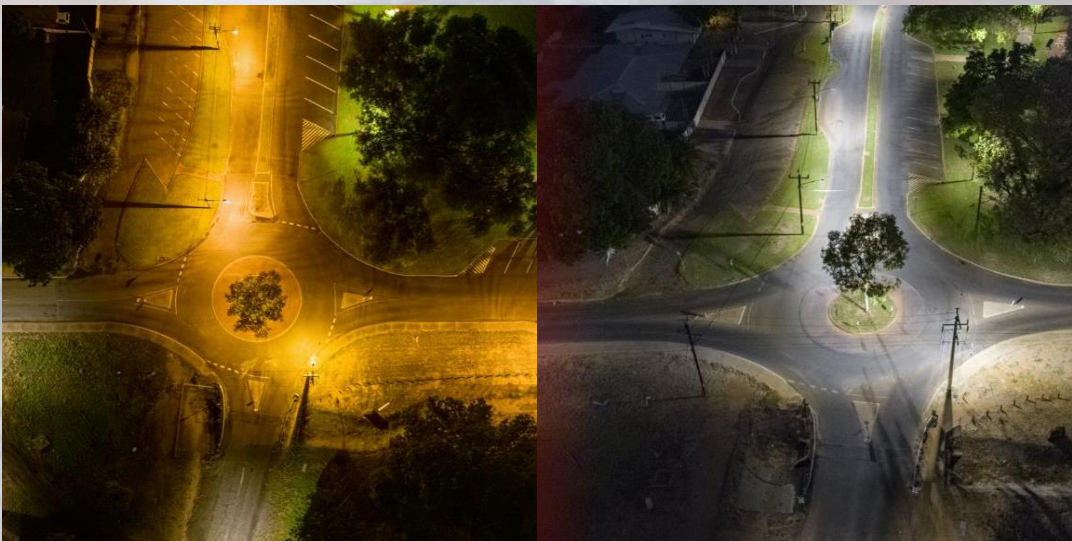
- Upon enough support being obtained, DBCA and Astrotourism WA will collaborate with Western Power to procure a qualified lighting designer to progress. Once developed, the final luminaire product design(s), specifications and costs will be shared with Local Governments who have registered their formal support for feedback prior to progressing any further with Western Power.

### Financial Implications:

Nil. DBCA has completed preliminary discussions with lighting designers and has identified that this initiative is feasible with negligible additional cost and tariffs. The cost of the design of a new dark sky and wildlife friendlier streetlight will be covered by DBCA.

### Request:

This initiative can be supported by providing a letter indicating confirmation your demand for such an LED streetlight luminaire for installation within your jurisdiction. A template letter of support is provided.



For further information:

Tristan Simpson, DBCA – [tristan.simpson@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:tristan.simpson@dbca.wa.gov.au) or (08) 9219 9754  
Carol Redford, Astrotourism WA – [carol@astrotourismwa.com.au](mailto:carol@astrotourismwa.com.au) or 0427 554 035



ECLIPSE DISCOVERY TOUR

# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS REPORT



Image Credit: Michael Goh



# ECLIPSE DISCOVERY TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

In April 2023, Astrotourism Western Australia hosted the Eclipse Discovery Tour across regional WA to celebrate the 2023 Solar Eclipse.

The project had the following objectives:

- encourage visitors and eclipse chasers to stay longer in regional Western Australia;
- increase overnight stays in the Wheatbelt, Mid-West, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions in April 2023;
- showcase Aboriginal Astronomy

- and Western Australia's Space Science Industry;
- capitalise on the global media spotlight generated by the 2023 TSE to promote WA as a world-class destination for dark sky Tourism;
- create a coordinated approach for dark sky tourism events/activities around the TSE;
- consolidate a consistent brand and marketing for the TSE events program; and
- develop an economy of scale through a coordinated approach to TSE-related events.



## 27 EVENTS

Across four regions and 18 regional local governments.



## 23 SPONSORS

Plus new collaborations between government, science and community groups



## 35 MEDIA STORIES

Across television, radio, print and web



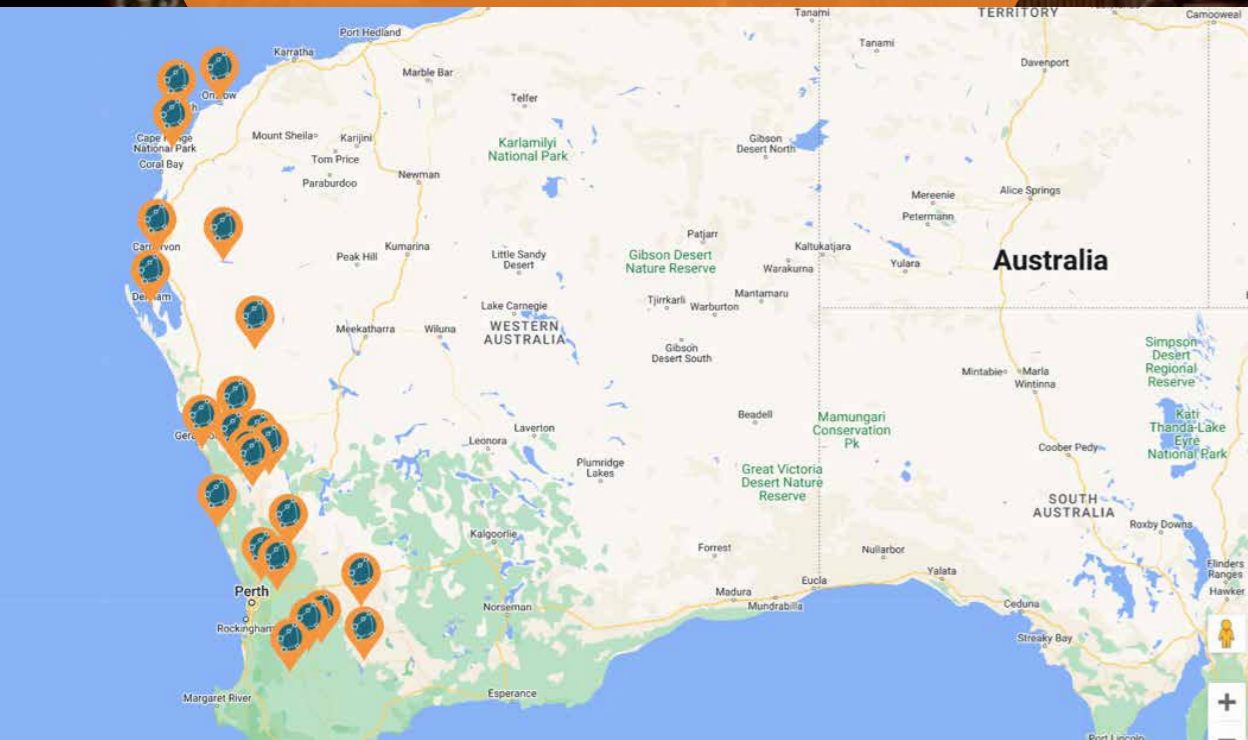
## 3000+ ATTENDEES

With 50% being visitors to the region or town.



## 55

Space and science communicators and minds contributing their expertise







*“It was very important for us as an industry and a community that we did so many astronomy nights around the eclipse to promote these country towns as destinations to visit as we won’t have a chance like this with international guests and intrastate visitors for at least another five years.”*

- Matt Woods, Perth Observatory



## 01 // ABOUT THE PROJECT

A total of 27 events across 4 regions were delivered by 55 stargazing and space science communicators. Events reached approximately 3,000 people of which 1,500 were non-local attendees and 150 were international visitors.

The project was supported by 23 financial sponsors. The Eclipse Discovery Tour entertained, inspired and leveraged Eclipse 2023 to promote Western Australia as a world-class dark sky tourism destination.

The Eclipse Discovery Tour was made possible by funding from Tourism WA, CSIRO - Australia’s national science agency, International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR), Scitech, Curtin University and 18 regional Local Governments including the Shires of:

- Ashburton
- Narrogin
- Carnamah
- Northam
- Carnarvon
- Perenjori

- Chittering
- Shark Bay
- Dandaragan
- Three Springs
- Lake Grace
- Upper Gascoyne
- Mingenev
- West Arthur
- Morawa
- Wickopin
- Narembeen
- Wongan Hills-Ballidu

Astrotourism WA worked with 21 Local Government Authorities and two private tourism operators to develop the Eclipse Discovery Tour and deliver 27 dark sky tourism events to support the 2023 Total Solar Eclipse (TSE). The events were delivered in the Wheatbelt, Mid-West, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions.

The project had the following objectives:

- encourage visitors and eclipse chasers to stay longer in regional Western Australia;
- increase overnight stays in the

- Wheatbelt, Mid-West, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions in April 2023; showcase Aboriginal Astronomy and Western Australia’s Space Science Industry;
- capitalise on the global media spotlight generated by the 2023 TSE to promote WA as a world-class destination for dark sky Tourism;
- create a coordinated approach for dark sky tourism events/ activities around the TSE;
- consolidate a consistent brand and marketing for the TSE events program; and
- develop an economy of scale through a coordinated approach to TSE-related events.



# 02 // ABOUT THE EVENTS

Each event included a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the TSE, WA as a world-class Dark Sky Tourism destination and WA space science projects. Following the formal presentation, visitors made their way outside to begin stargazing and view through telescopes. They also enjoyed a green laser pointer tour of the constellations.

Aboriginal astronomy featured at three events and included activities and/or Welcome to Country from Rebecca Fitzgerald, Ballardong Country and Better Heart Self Care; Rennee Turner, Yinggarda Country and Wooramulla Eco Cultural Journeys; Charlie Shaw, Yued Country; Hazel Walgar, Baiyungu Country, Baiyungu Dreaming.

Some of Australia's top science speakers were featured on the Eclipse Discovery Tour. These included Dr Mark Cheung from CSIRO, Prof Melanie Johnston-Hollitt from Curtin University, Kevin Vinsen from ICRAR, Dr Vanessa Moss and Rachel Raynor from CSIRO and Leon Smith from Scitech.

Two of WA's most foremost astrophotographers, Michael Goh and Roger Groom, delivered components at three events.

A highlight event was held at Bullara Station on the night before the TSE. All teams and the volunteers participated in the delivery of this event.

Astrotourism WA also worked with One Gate Farm in the Shire of West Arthur to develop an event which may lead to new dark sky tourism experiences being developed.

A team from the University of Southern Illinois (two staff members, Bob Baer and

Corinne Brevik with 10 students) joined the tour to deliver outreach and conduct science. They have indicated that he will return with students again for dark sky tourism projects. Matthias Schmitt, Dark Skies Coordinator at Cedar Breaks National Monument Dark Sky Park, USA and Astronomy Guide at Stargazing Zion travelled to Australia to be part of the project.

Below are some snapshots from different events and the types of visitors attending:

- Some events attracted more visitors than expected such as the town of Wickepin.
- A family from Dunsborough travelled specifically to Narembeen for the event there before going north to the eclipse.
- Tasmanians were in the crowd at the Mingenew event. Audiences for stargazing nights in Mingenew are usually made up of approximately 90% local people. The Eclipse Discovery Tour event audience was made up of approximately 90% out of town visitors.
- Costa Rican visitors attended the event in Bakers Hill in the Shire of Northam.
- Visitors travelled specifically from Exmouth to Onslow for the Eclipse Discovery Tour event held there. One attendee commented: "We thoroughly enjoyed the night. It was very well presented and explained and the knowledge of each of the astronomers was very good. It opened up a whole new world..."
- German visitors travelled to Gascoyne Junction to join the Eclipse Discovery Tour.
- American visitors were at the event held in Cervantes.
- There was a significant number of interstate visitors at the events north of Perth that were on the way to the eclipse.



Image Credit: Michael Goh



Image Credit: Michael Goh

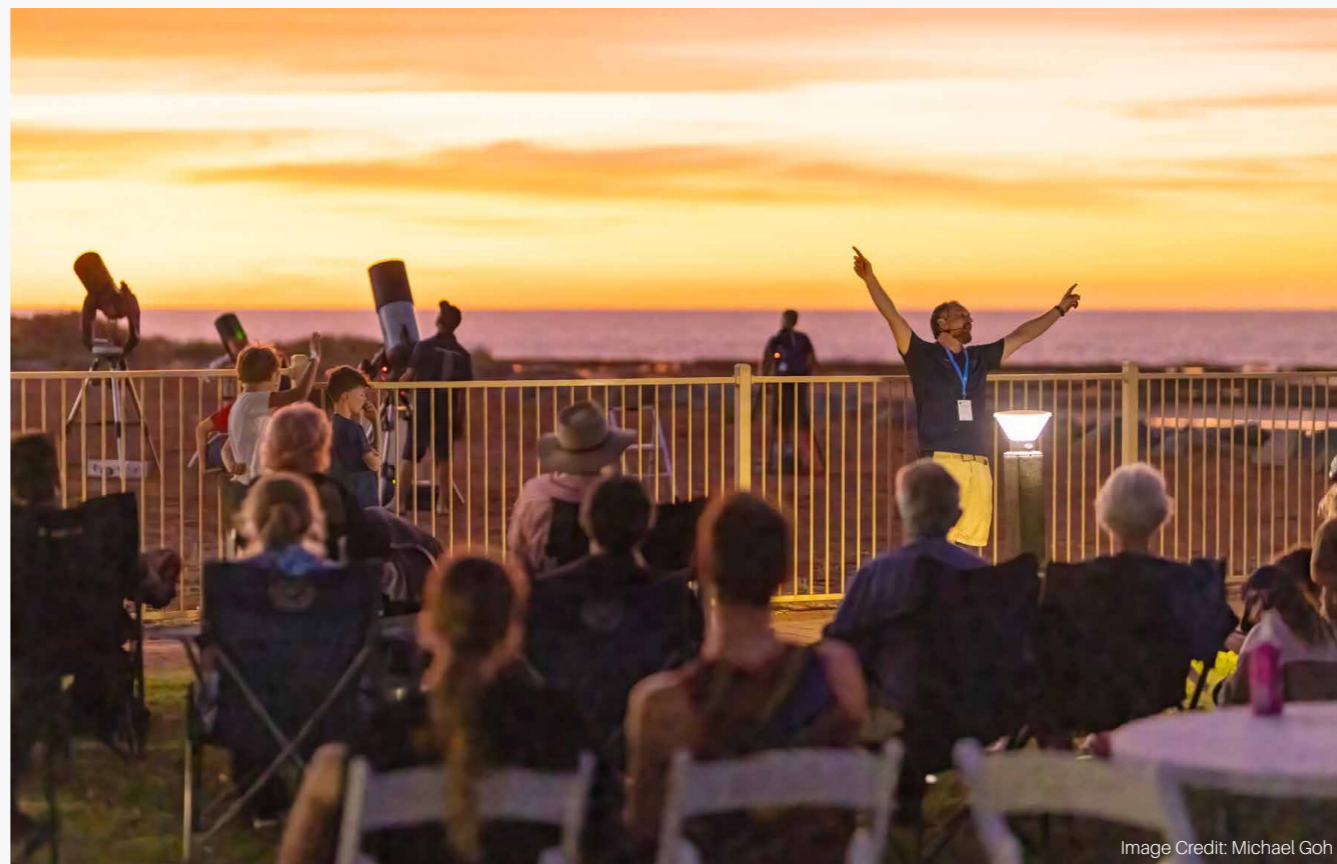


Image Credit: Michael Goh



Image Credit: Michael Goh



Image Credit: Michael Goh





## 03 // IMPROVEMENTS

Some feedback received after events can inform future astronomy related events for the total solar eclipse in 2028. The improvements to consider for future events include:

- If events are organised two years prior to the next eclipse in 2028, there will be the opportunity to sell these experiences to international tour groups planning their travel to WA.
- Budgeting for paid advertising will improve marketing and target those visitors traveling to WA for the eclipse.
- Aboriginal astronomy was very popular and could be expanded in future activities.
- Special “show bags” including collated

solar viewing glasses, eclipse educational material, WA tourism promotion and other giveaways from sponsors could be included at events for each attendee to give more longevity to the event experience.

- Some audience members commented that the science in some of the presentations was a bit hard to understand. Preparing science speakers for the type of audience will be beneficial to ensure the right pitch of presentations.
- Some of the larger events with more attendees would benefit from a larger public address system to ensure all could clearly hear the outside presentations.

## 04 // MARKETING AND PROMOTION

There was no paid advertising budget to promote the Eclipse Discovery Tour. Astrotourism WA worked hard to ensure as much organic promotion raised the awareness and profile of the stargazing events. Events were listed on a variety of websites including:

- Astrotourism WA - [www.astrotourismwa.com.au/events/](http://www.astrotourismwa.com.au/events/)
- Ningaloo Eclipse Website - [www.ningalooeclipse.com/events/](http://www.ningalooeclipse.com/events/)
- Tourism WA - [www.westernaustralia.com/](http://www.westernaustralia.com/)
- Australia’s Golden Outback - [www.australiastourism.com.au/search/?query=eclipse](http://www.australiastourism.com.au/search/?query=eclipse)
- Australia’s Coral Coast - [www.australiascoralcoast.com/search/?query=eclipse](http://www.australiascoralcoast.com/search/?query=eclipse)

- Destination Perth - [www.destinationperth.com.au/events](http://www.destinationperth.com.au/events) (search for eclipse to find the events)
- International Dark Sky Week (relevant events occurring from 15-22 April) - [dsw.darksky.org/events-2023/](http://dsw.darksky.org/events-2023/)
- Eventbrite - [www.eventbrite.com.au/o/astrotourism-wa-33534007307](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/astrotourism-wa-33534007307)



Image Credit: Michael Goh



# 05 // MEDIA STORIES

DATE	MEDIA OUTLET	TITLE/LINK
7 May 2023	ABC Landline	<a href="#">Starry Skies: Satellites competing with dark starry nights</a>
30 April 2023	ABC News	<a href="#">Sacrificing the stars</a>
21 April 2023	ABC Australia-wide (Sinead Mangan)	<a href="#">Dark and Quiet Skies</a>
21 April 2023	The New York Times Australia Letter	<a href="#">The Biggest, Darkest Sky in Australia</a>
21 April 2023	ABC Great Southern (Breakfast Show with Tim Wong)	Darkan is an ideal dark sky weekend getaway for those in light polluted Perth and Bunbury. (Sharon Bell, Shire of West Arthur)
20 April 2023	ABC Midwest Wheatbelt	Total Solar Eclipse and Dark Sky Tourism
20 April 2023	Batemans Bay Post/Moruya Examiner	<a href="#">As it happened: One in 400 year total solar eclipse hits Aussie skies</a>
20 April 2023	Wimmera Mail-Times	<a href="#">How and when to watch the rare total solar eclipse</a>
20 April 2023	ABC YouTube	<a href="#">Emotions run unexpectedly high, as the eclipse passes over Western Australia</a>
18 April 2023	ABC Kimberley - Eddie Williams	Total Solar Eclipse and Dark Sky Tourism
18 April 2023	Canberra Times	<a href="#">How and when to watch the rare total solar eclipse</a>
18 April 2023	Geraldton Guardian/The West Australian	<a href="#">Once-in-a-lifetime: Visitors come for the eclipse but stay for the stars</a>
17 April 2023	Channel 10 News	Counting Down and Launch Pad for WA's Astrotourism
16 April 2023	Narrogin Observer	<a href="#">Solar eclipse: Astrotourism WA event set to light up Darkan</a>
16 April 2023	Channel 7 Sunrise	<a href="#">Space Spectacle 1 in 400 Year Event</a>
29 March 2023	Channel Nine News (must be logged into Facebook to view)	<a href="#">Dark Sky Tourism - Turning WA into the World's Stargazing Capital</a>
28 March 2023	ABC Pilbara Kimberley	Eclipse Discovery Tour and Mars/Moon
28 March 2023	ABC Midwest Wheatbelt Goldfields Esperance	Eclipse Discovery Tour and Mars/Moon
27 March 2023	6PR (Jon Lewis)	Asteroid and Eclipse Discovery Tour, Riley Johnston

DATE	MEDIA OUTLET	TITLE/LINK
20 March 2023	Australia's Coral Coast eNews	<a href="#">Eclipse Discovery Tour</a>
2 March 2023	Australia's Golden Outback	<a href="#">Eclipse Discovery Tour</a>
2 March 2023	Mid West Times	<a href="#">Eclipse Discovery Tour</a>
24 Feb 2023	Triple M Geraldton - Todd Gray, Breakfast Announcer	Total Solar Eclipse and Eclipse Discovery Tour
22 Feb 2023	ABC Radio Pilbara - Kelly Gudgeon, Breakfast Presenter	Total Solar Eclipse and Eclipse Discovery Tour
7 Feb 2023	ABC Radio Regional Drive 5.30pm	Eclipse viewing site at Exmouth and dark sky tourism
2 Feb 2023	Canberra Times/Bendigo News	<a href="#">Total Solar Eclipse and Dark Sky Tourism</a>
18 Oct 2022	Ningaloo Eclipse Enews	<a href="#">Eclipse series of events announcement</a>
20 April 2022	ABC Radio Perth Breakfast with Tom Baddeley (7.40am)	<a href="#">2023 Eclipse</a>
20 April 2022	ABC Pilbara and Kimberley Mornings Hinako Shiraishi (10.30am)	2023 Eclipse
20 April 2022	Triple M Regional News with Adrianna Jakimowicz for Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley (news bulletins)	2023 Eclipse
20 April 2022	Channel 9 News with Monika Kos	2023 Eclipse
20 April 2022	Tourism WA extended 2023 2023 Eclipse video	<a href="#">Dark Sky Tourism</a>
20 April 2022	American Sky and Telescope Magazine	<a href="#">Plan Now for the 2023 Solar Eclipse in Western Australia</a>
19 April 2022	Perth is OK	<a href="#">Solar Eclipses, Moon Rises &amp; Space Safaris: Welcome To WA's Stargazing Capital</a>
19 March 2022	ABC News	<a href="#">Total solar eclipse in April 2023 to shine a bright light on WA's astrotourism ambitions</a>

Image Credit: Michael Goh





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