

# Councillor Information Bulletin

For the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### **INDEX**

### 1. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### 2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

### 3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Wellbeing Update Tourism Update Hood-Penn Museum Update

### 4. **COUNCIL INFORMATION**

### SHIRE OF YILGARN

Grand Reopening of Recreational Centre Invitation

### OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Indicative Audit Fee Letter

### AUSTRALIAS GOLDEN OUTBACK

Draft AGO Visitor Economy Strategy 2033

### MAIN ROADS

Regional Road Group Report April 2025

### NATIONALS WA

Central Wheatbelt Officially Declared Media Statement

### WALGA

Band 4 Local Governments Meeting

### SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TRIBUNAL

2025 Determination for CEO's and Elected Council Members

### • DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES

Letter From Director General Mike Rowe

### • DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SPORT AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Racing, Gaming and Liquor Alert



### **SHIRE OF WESTONIA**

### April/May 25

Date & Time	What	Where	Who
Thursday	Council Meeting	Chambers	Councillors, Senior
17 April	Audit Entrance Meeting		Staff
Friday	ANZAC Day Service	Boodalin Soak	Councillors, Senior
25 April	-		Staff
Monday	SRRG Meeting	Zoom Meeting	Cr Geier
28 April			
Wednesday	WEROC Board Meeting	Westonia	President and CEO
7 May			
Thursday	Council Meeting	Chambers	Councillors, Senior
15 May			Staff

### **CEO'S REPORT**

### • GENERAL MATTERS

 The new Museum project is progressing well with the steel columns, stud framing walls and timber trusses installed.



 The Warm Water Pool concrete structure has been poured and will be left to cure for a month or so. Building structural works will commence soon in between the building works being carried out at the new Museum.



- Shire President and I attended the Great Eastern Zone Forum held in Bruce Rock on Friday 28 March.
- I attended the Westonia Art Show held on the Friday evening of 28 March.
- Kayla Coulter has been appointed for a 6 month maternity period as the administration officer.
- I have been liaising with representatives from Inpex in relation to the workings of the Development Conditions imposed by the Council on Tree Farming developments.
- I have approached the Shire of Merredin to dispose of our metal scrap waste from the tip to their licensed tip site.
- I have met with a representative from Stirling Asphalt to plan and quote the proposed Asphalt works required within the townsite.
- Council's consultant EHO visited on Tuesday 8 April and conducted inspections of all food premises. The Carrabin Roadhouse is again non-compliant in the public ablutions area and the sewerage drainage issues at the back of the building. A notice is currently being drafted to be issued to the operator and landlord of the property.
- I have been meeting with the Pool Manager working through the urgent findings from the LISWA report on the Westonia Swimming Pool.

### • DELEGATED AUTHORITY ACTIONS

### ROADCREW

- The works crew are carrying out the 2.2km re-sheeting project on Leeman Road.
- The graders were contracted by the Shire of Nungarin to grade 22km of their roads adjacent to the M040.
- Currently negotiating some private works for the road trains on the Great Eastern Highway project with Fulton Hogan.
- The non affected works crew will be taking extended leave over the easter period and will commence work again on Monday 28 April.

### TOWN

- All of Council's outside workforce set up and clean-up of the oval for the Wessy on the Green Festival.
- The refurbishment of the Caravan Park Leach Drains is progressing very well considering all of the work had to be carried out during non-curfew times.
- Preparation works for the landscaping of the Pool Kiosk project is well underway with the hard landscaping of ornamental rocks being completed next week.

### • PLANT HOURS

The following is a list of plant and vehicle kilometre and hour readings for the period ending 31.3.25.

Item		28.2.25	31.3.25
P1	CAT 140 GRADER	3,352hrs	3,405hrs
P2	CAT 12M GRADER	9,682hrs	9,797hrs
P3	PRIME MOVER (KENWORTH)	38,342kms	40,042kms
P4	ROAD TRAIN (NEW FREIGHTLINER)	132,932kms	135,316kms
P5	JOHN DEERE LOADER	5,558hrs	5,605hrs
P6	CAT ROLLER (SKIP)	2,373hrs	2,389hrs
P7	MINI-EXCAVATOR	1338hrs	1353hrs
P8	TELEHANDLER JCB	242hrs	280hrs
P9	TOYOTA (GRADER UTE)	61,967kms	62,729kms
P10	MITSUBISHI CANTER	27,514kms	28,182kms
P11	TOYOTA HILUX (GARDENER) WT 35	112,772kms	112,970kms
P12	JOHN DEERE (5100)	2,705hrs	2,710hrs
P14	TOYOTA LANDCRUISER GXL (CEO)	41,003kms	42,674kms
P15	TOYOTA HILUX D/CAB (W/SUPER)	39,420kms	43,089kms
P16	TOYOTA RAV4 (Community)	4,173kms	kms
P17	TOYOTA HILUX DUAL CAB	58,352kms	59,703kms
P19	FAST ATTACK	19,957kms	20,009kms
P20	FIRE TRUCK	7,397kms	7,397kms
P18	WESSY BUS	153,274kms	153,374kms
P22	KUBOTA RIDE ON MOWER (OVAL)	2,129hrs	2,143hrs
P23	TOYOTA MINI-BUS (WT COM V)	48,727kms	kms
P24	CAT ROLLER (LOLA)	2,711hrs	2,801hrs
P25	MICK's BEAUT UTE	179,767kms	180,543kms
P27	TOYOTA PRADO GXL (DCEO)	9,400kms	10,250kms
P28	TOYOTA HILUX UTILITY (TOWN)	2,408kms	2,749kms

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING REPORT

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Grant applications & award nominations submitted:

**Bendigo Bank community grant** – We were successful in obtaining the community grant for Fireworks and Kids Arcade games for Wessy on the Green a total of \$14,300.00

Future grant opportunities & award nominations:

### **WELLBEING REPORT**

Age Care

**Westonia Home Care Services** 

We are continuing to provide community Wellbeing activities

We continue to provide Meals on wheels, Lite N Easy Equipment and Aids for our clients Westonia Home Care Services Clients: **21.** 

Staff delivering services: 7

Services: Administration and Package management, Cleaning and Household tasks, Medical, Personal Care, Social Support, Support work, Gardening & Maintenance, Meals, Allied health, Medicine management, Equipment and Home modifications.

### WESTONIA WHERE OLD IS GOLD PROJECT

Proudly supported by Foundation for Rural & Reginal Renewal through the funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund. This fund is helping regional communities prepare for drought through its small network grant initiative. With the aid of the FRRR funding the "Westonian's working together towards community resilience" Project was

initiated. Westonia Shire, CRC and Community, have been able to create an all inclusive community art project and two community events to showcase "Westonia Life 2025", living and working in this fabulous community, captured in one piece of art and two unique events, the Westonia Art exhibition and Wessy on the Green community music festival.

Thanks to Kila Della Bosca our project began with the lettering concept of Brown "WESTONIA" to match our signage and red dirt and Gold "WHERE OLD IS GOLD" was painted across all 24 canvases.

Each canvas had been given a theme and community groups and individuals had been suggested for allocation.

After the first Plonk n Donk (organised Sip and Paint/Craft nights) for the year held on the 18th of February our project ideas were beginning to take shape. We visited groups and individuals to explain our art concept and deliver each canvas.

Each participant was given their specific canvas theme and freedom to choose the medium or craft (Paint, paper, material, wool, Quilting, scrap booking, photography, quilling, cartooning...)

The only guidelines given were, to make sure the painted letter was not covered but remained prominent and to have fun with it!



The original Inspiration for our design - 2020 Community Art Project Ballymena NSW





The CRC held a weekly Plonk n Donk if any one needed access to materials or inspiration.

Participants were asked that their canvases be finished and back to the Shire office by the 19th of March 2025 and by Monday the 24/3/25 all canvases were back and masterpieces complete. The collage 2.4m long by 1.2m deep project was then skillfully constructed and set on backing to enable display by Mr Des O'Rafferty. Ready for the unveiling at the Westonia Art Exhibition on Friday 28/3/25 at 6pm.

The community involvement has been phenomenal with 17 community groups and businesses

represented. Over 30 people getting very creative and somewhat out of their comfort zone to create this wonderful piece of art, a stamp in time standing as a inspiration for future artistic projects to come.

With the Art Exhibition in addition to our art project, we are able to display pieces from local artist's, photographer's, craft and up and coming works by the Merredin Fine Arts Society, Sophie Jane Photography, TJT Photography and more.

After the exhibition WESTONIA WHERE OLD IS GOLD will be on display at "Wessy on the Green 25" and finally to be hung in the Westonia Medical Centre waiting room.



This art project is a credit the collaborative efforts of every day Westonian's.

It stands as a pillar of Westonia's resilience and strength our wish is that Westonian's can continue to draw from that strength and inspiration from this project and others like it for years to come.



WESSY on the GREEN 5/4/25

Woha what an Event!

Over 560 people through the gates

Just over \$16,000 in profit which brings our WotG event sustainability pool just over \$29,000 to go towards future "Wessy on the Green" music and community festivals.

Feedback has been overwhelming with everyone thoroughly enjoying the event. We had a large increase in visitors to our town this time around, who made the most of the entertainment on the night, frequenting the pub the night before/after and making a weekend of it, look out 2027!

Wessy on the Green 2025 was proudly supported by Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal through the funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund. Helping regional communities prepare for drought through its small network grant initiative.

Where to start! The food was fantastic, music was suited to a huge range of ages and added to the laid back feel of the day. The weather was questionable but didn't deter to many. We lost sports fun inflatables, but Bumper cars and the Tipsy Turtle pulled us through. Again, we had plenty of free activities for the young'uns, with Birds of Prey who brought a great range of Birds and expert knowledge, which made this display a popular tent for visitors young and old. Merredin artist Sheree Lowe brought her plaster painting workshop to engage the children's creative sides, and for the little ones what could be better than a sand pit full of toys to play with! Once the evening set in Balls n All Arcade well and truly delivered the goods. With a selection of arcades games that kept absolutely everyone entertained and the boys were on hand to fix any breakdowns, so the kids were never disappointed for long. Lastly there was Sideshow Amusements BUMPER CARS what a showstopper the biggest question is who enjoyed them more, the oldies or the young'uns? My money would be on the oldies!

With the kiddos sorted there was time in between bands for the adults to peruse the venue to check out all the shiny grunty cars in the Car Demo, a huge thanks to Daimo for organizing again this year it is getting bigger and bigger each year. Thanks to FRRR we were able to create our pop up community information and engagement hub, with Regional men's health initiative "Talk to a Mate", Independent flavorista, TJT photography, wheatbelt wardrobe (recycled clothing), Warm Water Leisure Pool fundraising, Snap on Tools & Micky Thompson Tyres, Paint the Town, Thermomix, Brookes Fidgets & Figurines, TJT photography, WotG \$5,000 fuel card raffle and our art exhibition which showcased a range of local talent and recent WESTONIA "WHERE OLD IS GOLD" community art project.

Results of the BP Fuel Gift Card Raffle

Raffle Permit # LS222845825

Drawn, after the 7:30pm ticket sale cut off, on Saturday 5/4/25.

Thank you to Ben from Megavision for drawing our two-ticket random draw.

Prize Draw 1, \$2500.00 BP Fuel Gift Card Winner - Nooky Ridgeway Ticket #176

Prize Draw 2, \$2500.00 BP Fuel Gift Card Winner - Maddy Boyd Ticket #47

Fireworks Button Pusher Raffle

Winner - Lani Hale and we didn't know she was excited about it at all!!!

Sealing the deal for everyone's tick of approval were the Fireworks and what a fantastic display that was, Westcoast Fireworks did an amazing job and added that extra bit of magic to the night.

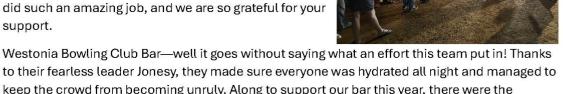
### Thank you too:

First and foremost our grant providers & sponsors as always these community events are just not possible without their support and generosity: Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal, Westonia Progress Association, Mukinbudin Community Bank, Bitutek, Edna May Operations Pty Ltd Ramelius Resources Ltd, Westonia Tavern, Centek Construction, MACE, Merredin Freightlines, MLG, Nutrien Merredin, Out West Mechanical, WCS Concrete Pty Ltd, Westrac Pty Ltd and Z Shearing. We must also mention Ramelius kindly donated the use of their lighting plant thanks to Daimo Geier for setting up, Westonia Tavern who provided large Chest Freezer so the bar ice could be kept at Premo temp and had a backup generator on standby. Also, to Karin and Rohan Day without you we would be well and truly in the manure.

Our Band's performances were incredible! First kicking off with the fabulous Ez & Jn'ita, then the knockout vocals of Jade and Duane with Brother & I, WACM Award winning Adele Oliver, what a top lady she is! Next up after the Fireworks was the boys from "Muka" and WACM Award winners The Eastern Line, Billy Higginson and the Pale Moon Riders and then it was finally the muchanticipated Sophie Jane Band you guys Rocked! Sophie Jane not only sang her heart out on stage, but was there for every meeting, busy bee and set up with Kids in tow thank you so much! Ben from Megavision worked his magic again! He was here by Friday night on the oval first thing Saturday morning, until after midnight. From setup, through sound and lighting checks, to band

performance and pack down he truly made the performances run seamlessly.

No-one could fault the amount of food options and availability this year with vendors opening from Friday night and from lunchtime on Saturday till midnight. Thank you to Bona Pizza, Uncle Diesel's Smoke n Grill, Mi Familia Flavours, & Wheatbelt Coffee Time, you all did such an amazing job, and we are so grateful for your support.



to their fearless leader Jonesy, they made sure everyone was hydrated all night and managed to keep the crowd from becoming unruly. Along to support our bar this year, there were the flamboyant Tipsy Turtle gals, who made a beautiful array of cocktails for a little bit of sparkle.

Westonia Golf Club and Shire Pres. Drake for the loan of the two fire pits. The much needed recovery breakfast on Sunday morning was well patronized, Liz, Zeta from the WWLP fundraising group did a roaring trade from 7am until 10am with over 80 orders and were very pleased to have been assisted by Adele Oliver and her mum Terri it was greatly appreciated, to make sure the event attendees & band members were fed before heading off on their journey home.

A special thank you to Liz Richter for offering to MC early on and taking the time to glean facts and information that she could pass on to event goers. You kept things moving and the schedule running smoothly, not an easy job to stay on top of.

Our Shire works, garden and cleaning crew who again made the event area a place of magic, moved fire pits, wine barrels, sand for sandpits, erected fences, rolled out bunting for miles delivered marquees, gazebos, pallets tables, pruned, raked every tree and bush, and kept the facilities in tip top condition, to make the whole town sparkle. All your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

The Shire, Councilors and CRC crew, WOW what we have achieved together falls nothing short of Amazing! It is impossible to list everything, but well done to everyone, you know who you are!

Last but not least, a HUGE shout out to our VOLUNTEERS! Who attend working group sessions, helped prior to WotG25, from decision making, to set up (the whole week prior), all day of the event and the next day clean up. From lighting towers, porta loos, decorations, assistance with entry, raffles, merch selling, runners, bar staff (some even getting their RSA that week so they could help). Many hands make light work, as they say, but the volunteers of Westonia take it to the next level. So please give yourselves, a pat on the back, because you make us proud to be Westonian's!

We will be holding a WotG25 debrief, for all the volunteers and organisers in the coming months when we catch our breath.





Coming up: 20/9/25 Masquerade Ball 8/11/25 Christmas Markets

Community Event Working Group are meeting every third Wednesday of the month to discuss community events ideas and initiative

### WESTONIA TOURIST PARK

Its has been a very busy start to April for the the park "Wessy on the Green 2025" saw plenty of campers take the opportunity to spend the whole weekend in town, which is always great for our local economy. The Easter long weekend is shaping up to be quite a busy which is great.

### **REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE**

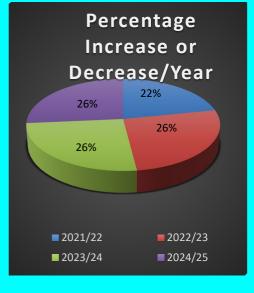
- Various minor repairs and maintenance ongoing. Focal area being bathroom maintenance (fixtures and disabled bathroom upgrade)
- Disabled toilet drainage will need some major work as tree roots have made their way into the pipes.

### **FUTURE PROJECTS**

- Permanent signage required to say "If office is unattended, please ring the caretakers phone or Shire office alternatively you can visit the Shire office during business hours Monday to Friday to complete your booking".
- Overflow new signs needed for sites and information sign needed to describe
  who to ring or see to book in and outline that you must un-hook. Defined bays
  might be a good idea for this area.

### **STATISTICS**







### **HOOD-PENN MUSEUM**

With the town full of visitors over the weekend for "Wessy on the Green 2025", the museum welcomed over 80 visitors, which was great, a special thank you Bob and Joyce Hood Penn who kindly put their hand up to do the Saturday shift and Judy Lindley who was able to cover the Sunday shift. The extension is is well underway with framework going up fot the external and internal walls, as always Pete and Des are doing a wonderful job.

### **REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE**

Various minor repairs and maintenance ongoing

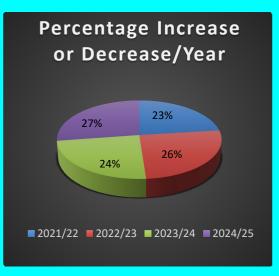
### **RECENT PROJECTS**

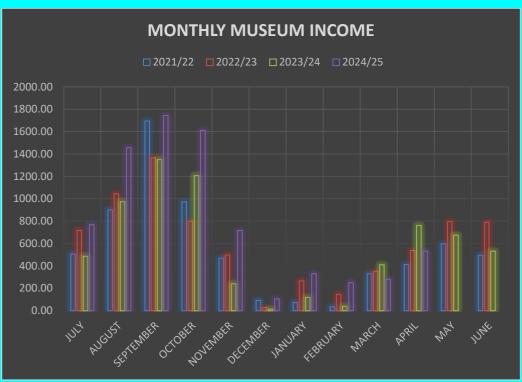
 War Memorial moved from OM Hall and photo signs in progress with Thompson Signs Cunderdin. 2 x New Mannequins are being constructed (a pilot and a garage attendant).

### **FUTURE PROJECTS**

 New scenes to be created in the existing space of the old storage room to tell the stories of our primary industries of which Westonia was founded on. STATISTICS









You are cordially invited to the

## GRAND REOPENING

Celebration

of the

## The Yilgarn Recreational Centre

SATURDAY 26 APRIL

AT 5.00 PM

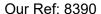
Cnr Spica St and Canopus St, Southern Cross

- Southern Cross Bombers Vs Burracoppin Cats game ends at 5pm
- Formal opening start is at 5.15pm
- Brother & I perfomance begins at 5.45pm
- The Murphy Brothers performance begins at 7pm
- Food Vans available

RSVP: Friday, 18th April 2025

yilgarn@yilgarn.wa.gov.au







7th Floor, Albert Facey House 469 Wellington Street, Perth

> Mail to: Perth BC PO Box 8489 PERTH WA 6849

**Tel**: 08 6557 7500 **Email**: info@audit.wa.gov.au

Mr Arthur Price Chief Executive Officer Shire of Westonia 41 Wolfram Street WESTONIA WA 6423

Email: ceo@westonia.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Price

### **AUDIT FEE 2025**

Our indicative fee for the audit of your 2024-25 financial report is \$45,110 (excl. GST). The indicative fee represents an increase of 30% compared to the prior year invoiced audit fee (2023-24: \$34,700). We have reviewed the additional fees charged in the previous year. If these fees are not considered recurring, we have taken that into account.

Our fee has been calculated to recover the OAG's costs, across our entire audit portfolio to deliver this year's audit work program. It considers a CPI increase of approximately 2.75% and cumulative public sector salary increases¹ of 9% since your last fee calculation, including a 5% increase in June 2024, a 4% increase in June 2025, effective for this period (noting there is an additional 3% planned for 2026). The fee also includes any directly related costs such as contract fees and travel expenses, as applicable. Further information on the Office's approach to audit fees are available on our webpage.

In addition to giving assurance on your entity's annual financial report, the audit will also provide transparency surrounding relevant legislative compliance, financial controls, probity, and governance matters, and enables our whole-of-sector parliamentary reporting and stakeholder liaison across the sector.

To uphold our auditor obligations, we are aiming to issue all financial audit opinions for the 2025 reporting period by no later than 5 December 2025. This will enable you to discharge your statutory financial reporting responsibility to ratepayers in a timely manner (i.e. by no later than 31 December 2025).

### Increase in audit effort

In recent years there has been an increase in audit effort due to:

- changing systems or processes at entities
- staff shortages at entities resulting in poorer financial management, reporting and audit preparedness

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> WA Public sector wage increase

- complexities and prior year issues which have resulted in an increase in audit findings (financial audit and information systems audit) and audit errors, with some entities receiving modified opinions (qualifications, disclaimers and other matter paragraphs)
- implementation of revised or new auditing/accounting standards.

As a result, our audit teams and senior staff are required to apply additional scrutiny to maintain audit quality and consistently report issues across the sector.

### Increase in professional salaries and contract audit firm fees

Our approved contract audit firms have significantly increased their audit fees (average of 38% for local government entities). This is consistent with the prior year and reflective of the current market, specifically for the auditing profession who, as with the OAG, have experienced significant labour constraints and wage inflation in recent years. It also reflects the firms allowing sufficient hours to properly address the issues being encountered in many local government's finance functions.

Similar to public sector salary adjustments affecting fee increases, salaries paid by our approved contract audit firms to retain professional staff also play a significant role in increasing costs.

The specific reason for the fee increase for your entity is:

 We have recently retendered the audit and now more fully recover both the contract audit firm's fee and our time and costs. As part of this process, we consulted with your entity if there were any significant fee increases.

### How we can work together to minimise audit fees

We request that you submit certified financial report to our audit team at the commencement of the final visit. You will also need to provide key information and have staff available during the audit process. Being better prepared and audit ready should mean fewer queries from the audit team, which contributes to timely completion of the audit and potentially reduced costs.

We encourage your finance team to use the <u>Audit Readiness - Better Practice Guide</u>. This will help you maintain a sound control environment and provide timely and well-prepared financial report, working papers etc to our audit team.

### Interim billing

We will introduce interim billing upon completion of the interim audit phase for an amount not exceeding 50% of the indicative fee, following our review of past invoice practice. Historically we issued the invoice at the conclusion of the audit and the issuing of the audit opinion. We have decided to modify this practice to align with the approach adopted across the professional services industry where billing typically occurs on a progressive basis (e.g. upon completion of key milestones or agreed timeframes). The remainder of the indicative fee will be issued at the conclusion of the audit and once the audit report has been issued.

### **Purchase order**

As part of our invoicing process, we kindly request that you arrange for a purchase order to be raised for our indicative audit fee relating to the 2025 audit. This will help ensure smooth processing of our invoice and compliance with your internal procurement procedures. Once the purchase order has been raised, please email <a href="mailto:finadmin@audit.wa.gov.au">finadmin@audit.wa.gov.au</a>

We will re-assess the costs for your audit closer to audit completion and inform you if a fee revision is necessary. A fee revision will only occur after we consult with you.

We look forward to working with you to promote accountability and transparency in the local government sector for the benefit of the community we jointly serve.

Please contact me on 6557 7534 if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Mikey Fiorucci Director Financial Audit 31 March 2025



### INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

Following the signing of a five-year contract with Tourism Western Australia (Tourism WA) in 2021 for funding to undertake Destination Marketing and Development activities, AGO was required to develop a strategic plan. The plan was subsequently approved by the Tourism WA Board and has since guided AGO's activities. That contract expires on 30 June 2026 and Tourism WA has commissioned a review of Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) to guide the negotiation for the development of a new contract. All RTO's have requested that a new contract needs to be renegotiated by 30 June 2025 to allow for planning past the expiry of the current contract.

The AGO Board specifically co-opted a member with strategic planning skills to guide future planning. In 2024, the AGO Board determined that it was time to review the plan and update it to reflect the changing tourism landscape that has emerged post COVID. AGO itself has grown in its outlook, generating significant funding from stakeholders other than Tourism WA, and expanded its capacity to deliver some outcomes that has seen it emerge as a leader in the state. This applies particularly in destination development activities that have translated into successful marketing benefits and assisted many businesses to attract new markets by being trade ready.

Under the guidance of the Finance and Risk Management Subcommittee (FARM) and the Strategic Planning Board member, Mark Holdsworth, the AGO Board has held a planning workshop and discussion at both subcommittee and Board meeting level to review the existing plan and present to the AGO membership for comment.

This is a very important document and will guide AGO's direction into the future. I encourage all members to provide feedback on the plan so that it can be finalised and put into action.

**Thanks** 

Rod Quartermain – Chairperson – Australia's Golden Outback

April 2025



## AUSTRALIA'S GOLDEN OUTBACK REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION ENTITY

Australia's Golden Outback is a not-for-profit peak regional tourism organisation covering 54% of Western Australia. It consists of four sub-regions (Wheatbelt, Goldfields, Gascoyne Murchison, Esperance & Fitzgerald Coast) and is governed by a Board of elected and co-opted Board members.a

As a peak regional tourism organisation, AGO is a tourism leader and a critical interface in the tourism ecosystem, initiating and enabling strong partnerships with and between the tourism industry, communities, local governments and other governments agencies to drive and sustain local visitor economies across the region.



### THE AUSTRALIA'S GOLDEN OUTBACK REGION

The Australia's Golden Outback region in Western Australia is a vast and diverse landscape, known for its rich gold-mining history, rugged natural beauty and unique wildlife. Stretching from the inland deserts and goldfields to the stunning coastline of the Southern Ocean, this region encompasses dramatic outback landscapes, historic towns, and vibrant Aboriginal culture.

The four unique sub regions, each offering distinct landscapes, attractions, and experiences:

### **Goldfields:**

Known as the heart of Australia's gold mining history, the area is dotted with historic sites, old mining towns, the Great Western Woodlands and sprawling red-dust landscapes.

### Wheatbelt:

The Wheatbelt region is a vast agricultural landscape with endless golden fields, charming rural towns, wildflowers and unique rock formations.

### **Esperance & Fitzgerald Coast:**

This coastal paradise has some of the world's most beautiful beaches alongside rugged coastline, offshore islands, incredible marine life and scenic national parks.

### **Gascoyne-Murchison:**

This remote region offers a true outback experience with vast, open landscapes, cattle stations and gorges. It has a raw and untouched beauty









### **DEFINING THE VISITOR ECONOMY**

The visitor economy encompasses a wide range of industries that offer goods and services to individuals travelling for holiday, visiting friends and relatives (VFR), business and international education, highlighting the multiplier effect of tourism in local economies.

### **TARGET OUTCOME**

To grow the AGO region visitor spend, aligned to the State's goal of growing the visitor economy to \$25 billion by 2033

### **VISION**

To embed and champion the visitor economy in the region as an industry that enriches and helps sustain local resilient communities and fosters positive economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes.

### MISSION

To be widely recognised as a tourism leader and authority that fosters collaboration and partnerships among tourism businesses, industry stakeholders, communities and government bodies to drive sustainable visitor economies within the Australia's Golden Outback region.



## WHO VISITS AUSTRALIA'S GOLDEN OUTBACK?

To improve the experiences and attractions of AGO, it is essential to ensure that all tourism stakeholders within the region have a clear understanding of the desires and preferences of visitors and who they are. By gaining a better understanding of what visitors are seeking and working together with industry partners, the AGO region can continue to evolve its experiences to attract key target audiences.

Intrastate leisure visitors to AGO cover all age groups, but skew towards an older demographic. AGO destinations have the strongest appeal to the 'Simple Nature' trip-type. Caravan and Camping is the most common type of accommodation used for AGO trips, accounting for almost half of intrastate leisure nights spent in the region.



### **AGO Key Domestic Target Markets**

### **Simple Nature**

Simple Nature intrastate trips are mostly mid-range socio economic status.

The Simple Nature trip taker is the typical Australian who loves nothing more than to escape the everyday for some time off the grid, getting back to the simple things in nature; a hike in the bush, some fishing and plenty of time to unwind, take things slow and spend some quality time with travel mates.

### **Family Time**

Those Australians most likely to take Family Time intrastate trips are most likely to be working and earn a mid to high income.

The Family Time trip taker is looking to rest and relax and spend some quality time with the kids — free from the distractions of everyday life and the unrelenting busyness of school and work routines and who prefer the convenience of jumping in the car and driving to their destination.

### **Premium Nature Seeker**

A Premium Nature holiday offers an opportunity for immersion in nature, peppered with the types of rare experiences that are worth both the time and money required to access them. This trip is all about transcendent travel experiences that create powerful memories. Getting off the beaten track – no matter how challenging or remote in pursuit of something truly unique – is a defining feature of this trip type. Physical challenge is welcome, as long as there's a touch of luxury and comfort to return at the end of the day. A trip including Esperance is more likely to appeal to this trip type than other parts of the AGO region.



### STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS AND INTENTION

These strategic goal areas highlight AGO's holistic approach to destination management, requiring AGO to be a critical interface, initiating and enabling strong partnerships with and between the tourism industry, communities, local governments and other governments agencies to drive and sustain local visitor economies across the region. It's also important for AGO to remain adaptable as conditions and needs change. AGO's strategy is specifically designed to be consistent with and value add to the Western Australian Visitor Economy Strategy 2033 released by the Western Australian Government in 2024.



### **Destination and Tactical Marketing**

Destination marketing will continue to drive future demand from key target markets. To enhance awareness and drive sustainable growth for the AGO region, we will promote its unique cultural and natural assets and experiences, positioning it as a must-visit destination.

### **Measures of Success**

Visitor spend; length of stay; co-op marketing contribution

### **Destination & Experience Development**

Fundamentally, it is imperative that AGO's destinations and tourism businesses deliver high quality experiences, services and amenities aligned to target market needs, which will attract visitors and generate crucial word-of-mouth marketing and repeat visitation. Improved regional access and dispersal will also be key. AGO is committed to improved air, rail, and sea access, recognising each mode's role in bolstering regional tourism. Investment in infrastructure across sub regional areas, such as signage, wayfinding and visitor amenity, is essential for a seamless and enjoyable travel experience.

### **Measures of Success**

Number of AGO/Local Government Authority (LGA) partnerships; LGA visitor experience enhancements; increase in the number of rooms/room upgrades; increase in quality tourism experiences; regional access improvements.





### Stakeholder Engagement, Collaboration and Partnerships

A resilient tourism ecosystem relies on building a network of strong and innovative partnerships across destination marketing and destination development that generates greater impact than stakeholders working in silos. AGO will take the lead, being the critical interface that fosters collaboration and meaningful change. AGO will be widely recognised as a trusted, independent organisation that fosters collaboration amongst tourism businesses, industry stakeholders, and government bodies. By facilitating the exchange of best practices, resources, and market insights, AGO will continue to build a network of strong relationships within the industry. This collaborative approach allows businesses to benefit from valuable partnerships, joint marketing initiatives, and increased visibility in the market.

### **Measures of Success**

Number of partnerships; industry financial contribution; membership survey indicators

### **Capability Building**

As a tourism leader and authority, AGO will facilitate destination and operator capability building to drive efficient sustainable local visitor economies and businesses by partnering with destinations on destination management, sharing capability building opportunities with industry and delivering bespoke initiatives if required

### **Measures of Success**

Improved operator capability

### **Governance and Sustainability**

The AGO Board is committed to responsible and transparent governance, ensuring that the organisation operates ethically and sustainably to create lasting value for our funding partners and the region we serve. To maintain balanced regional representation, the Board comprises elected members from the tourism industry and Golden Outback community, as well as co-opted members selected for their specialised expertise. Decision-making is open and transparent, supported by sub-committees aligned with our strategic plan, which enable focused oversight of programs, finance, and risk management. This structure allows the Board to adapt effectively to evolving economic and environmental conditions, ensuring resilient and sustainable growth for the Golden Outback.

### **Measures of Success**

Continued focus and evidence of best governance practice





### STRATEGIC GOAL INITIATIVES

### **Destination and Tactical Marketing**

- Develop and implement an annual targeted consumer and trade destination marketing strategy for key target markets
- Create and deliver co-operative tactical marketing campaigns with LGAs,
   Local Tourism Organisations and operators to maximise the effectiveness
   of stakeholder marketing efforts
- Identity and implement cross-regional initiatives with RTOs and other key stakeholders
- Maximise the leverage of Tourism WA and Tourism Australia to promote the region in their campaigns
- Showcase the region and operators at targeted trade events

### **Destination & Experience Development**

- Support/partner with LGAs in developing and implementing sustainable destination tourism strategies
- Support/partner with self-drive trail co-operatives to enhance the visitor experience
- Identify and collaborate with stakeholders to implement targeted Tourism
   Development Management Plans initiatives specific to each sub region
- Champion and facilitate product and experience development across the region
- Advocate with key stakeholders for improved infrastructure to enhance regional connectivity, visitor safety and access to the region e.g. aviation access, roads, mobile connectivity

### Stakeholder Engagement, Collaboration and Partnerships

- Identity and form strong relationships and collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders, including the industry, to drive resilient local visitor economies
- Develop and implement an annual stakeholder engagement plan
- Champion the visitor economy as an industry sector that enriches and helps sustain local resilient communities and fosters economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes
- Provide industry stakeholders with access to up-to-date consumer research to enable them to make date driven business decisions that cater to visitor preferences and trends

### **Capability Building**

- Develop operator business, experience development and marketing capability by identifying and sharing opportunities and collaborating on initiatives
- Work with LGAs and event holders on event capability building initiatives
- Develop AGO's capabilities and systems to optimise operational efficiencies
- Facilitate the exchange of best practices, industry and market trends, insights and resources to foster improved standards and innovation
- Work with government agencies, industry associations, and education providers to advocate for policies and programs that support the growth and sustainability of the sector

### **Governance and Sustainability**

- Work collaboratively with management to set and guide the organisation's strategic direction ensuring alignment with tourism goals for the AGO
- Effective communication of AGO plans to stakeholders, integration of stakeholder feedback to planning and decision making and ensuring that AGO objectives align with stakeholder needs and expectations
- Maintain a diverse and skilled board by evaluating board composition, ensuring regional representation and onboarding new members
- Ensure sound financial practices, including budgeting, financial reporting, and auditing, to support long term financial health and resource allocation
- Monitor and evaluate organisational performance while ensuring continuous improvement, mitigate risk and foster a
  culture of compliance and integrity



118/418 Murray Street, Perth WA 6000

T: (08) 9325 1511 | E: admin@goldenoutback.com

W: australiasgoldenoutback.com









### **Roads**

### Local Government Transport and Roads Research and Innovation Program (LGTRRIP)

Guidelines for the use of crumbed rubber modified asphalts, sprayed seals, reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) and a catalogue of standard pavement profiles are scheduled for publication shortly. Work has commenced on an investigation into available technologies for best practice road condition assessments and data collection and the development of a road safety rating tool for intersections.

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

The condition assessment survey of significant roads in the Pilbara and Gascoyne regions is now complete and Local Governments have been provided access to the condition data via an online tool and hard drive. The condition survey project for the Kimberley region has commenced, with data logging to begin in April.

### **Road Rail Interface Agreements**

Rail Interface Agreements are a requirement under the *Rail Safety National Law (WA) Act 2015.* Each metropolitan Local Government with road/rail crossings with PTA electrified network has now signed this updated agreement. For road/rail interfaces on the Arc Infrastructure network, a model *pro forma* agreement between Local Governments and Arc Infrastructure is nearing the end of negotiations and should be available for Local Government review and action soon. WALGA will begin a process to liaise with each relevant affected Local Government to provide advice around the new agreement, once the *pro forma* agreement has been finalised.

### Update of User Guides for calculating the cost of road wear for defined freight tasks

Due to recent escalation in road construction costs, WALGA has initiated an update of the unit rates that are used to underpin the methodologies in the User Guides for calculating the cost of road wear for defined freight tasks on sealed and unsealed roads. NTRO have been appointed to update the guides and to compile an online calculator. The updates are scheduled for publication in April.

### **Operational Boundaries and Asset Responsibilities in Rural Regions**

Main Roads have released a draft policy document that defines the operational and maintenance boundaries between State and Local Roads outside of the Metropolitan Region (a policy for the Metropolitan Region was published in 2020). WALGA has consulted Local Governments and Zone committees. Feedback has been collated, and a submission response has been provided to Main Roads.

### **Funding**

### Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) Model Revisions

The WALGA Infrastructure Team is working with the Regional Road Groups to harmonise the MCA models used by Regional Road Groups to prioritise projects for Road Project Grant funding. The proposed changes to the MCA models reflect the new focus areas of the State Roads Funds to Local Governments Agreement, while still allowing for flexibility to recognise



the significant differences between regions. All the Regional Road Groups have commenced the MCA revision process, with the process in the Gascoyne and South West region now complete.

### **Transport**

### **Bus Stop Infrastructure**

Bus stop infrastructure agreement is in its final stages. It is anticipated that the parties will sign the new agreement in April.

### **Active Transport and Micromobility-Discussion Paper**

On 6 March, WALGA hosted the Active Transport Strategic Forum, where high-level stakeholders were invited to provide insights on the gaps and challenges in active transport that WALGA had identified. These discussions will help shape the development of WALGA's Active Transport policy position. As the next step, an online workshop for Local Government officers is scheduled for 2 April.

### **Asset Management**

### Road Assets and Expenditure Report Update Project

Tango IT has completed a final report detailing the current processes used to develop the RAE Report and identifying options for improvement in data collection, interpretation, and presentation. Work has commenced to prepare the procurement documents to progress to Phase 2 of the project. This phase will include the development of a database, reporting interface, and dashboard.

### **Road Safety**

### **Road Safety Council Update**

The Road Safety Council met on 14 March, primarily to consider submissions for Road Trauma Trust Account funding and to prepare the Council's recommendations to the Minister responsible for road safety for the 2025-26 budget. The other matters considered at that meeting included: updates on the road safety research program, a proposal to introduce demerit point penalty for lower-level speeding offences, and reviews of both the e-rideable regulations and the graduated licensing systems. The Road Safety Council meet next in June.

### **Chantelle Pedrotti**

From:

Bill Price

Sent:

Wednesday, 9 April 2025 2:51 PM

To:

Chantelle Pedrotti

Subject:

FW: MEDIA STATEMENT: Central Wheatbelt Officially Declared

From: Lachlan Hunter MP - Member for Central Wheatbelt < lachlan.hunter@nationalswa.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 11:49 AM **To:** Bill Price <ceo@westonia.wa.gov.au>

Subject: MEDIA STATEMENT: Central Wheatbelt Officially Declared





### **CENTRAL WHEATBELT OFFICIALLY DECLARED**

Lachlan Hunter has been officially declared the third Nationals Member for Central Wheatbelt in the 2025 State Election. Following the distribution of preferences, Mr Hunter secured the seat with a final vote count of 73.31%.

Reflecting on the declaration, Mr Hunter expressed his deep gratitude to the people of Central Wheatbelt for putting their faith in him to be their local member.

"I am truly honoured to have been officially declared the Member for Central Wheatbelt.

"What made this moment even more special was the opportunity to celebrate the declaration in my hometown of Bruce Rock. Being surrounded by family, friends, and community members after the Great Eastern Country Zone Forum made it an unforgettable experience."

Mr Hunter acknowledged the support of the community and his volunteers. He also pledged his commitment to represent all constituents.

"No matter who you voted for, I am committed to working tirelessly every day to advance the interests of the Central Wheatbelt and all Western Australians."

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament of WA will resume on April 8, where the official work of all State Members will commence for the next four years.

Mr Hunter also took the opportunity to thank WAEC Returning Officer Robert Dew and all his staff (Konnongorring) for their professionalism throughout the election process.

Click here to download PDF version



Lachlan Hunter with WAEC Returning Officer Robert Dew

Greg Hunter (Lachlan's father), Audrey Hunter (Lachlan's grandmother), Lachlan & Robert Dew



# Band 4 Local Governments meeting | update

## Summary of meeting

Following the Band 4 roundtable meeting hosted by the Minister for Local Government, Hon Hannah Beasley, on 3 September, WALGA was pleased to host a further meeting of Band 4 Local Governments to continue the discussion.

The meeting was held on 11 October at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. All 60 Band 4 Local Governments in the State were invited to attend. Overall, 72 representatives from 48 Local Governments attended the meeting.

The aim of the meeting was to identify and agree on the top issues facing Band 4 WA Local Governments, to enable the group to consider and develop potential solutions to these issues, before presenting to the Minister.

Caroline Robinson, Director of 150 Square facilitated the discussion.

The top strategic and operational issues identified during the meeting (from most pressing to least pressing) were:

- 1. Housing
- 2. Audit
- 3. Provision of medical services
- 4. Financial Assistance Grants (timing)

WALGA has since undertaken work on the above issues. A progress update is provided below.

## Progress update

### Housing

### Policy and advocacy work

WALGA continues to advocate to the State Government to increase capital funding in areas of market failure. In November, WALGA hosted a Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) workshop with representation from a diverse range of Local Governments and senior officials from the Department of Communities, Treasury and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. The workshop considered the current and future GROH program build-to-lease model in the context of the current WA construction market with a view to policy changes. WALGA is waiting on the meeting outcome to be progressed by the State Agencies, noting that State Agencies' ability to progress has been impacted by the upcoming election and caretaker period.

The State 2024-25 Mid-year Review included a new \$400 million Housing Enabling Infrastructure Fund which seeks to increase housing supply by funding water and power infrastructure.



WALGA's 2025 State Election platform calls for the State Government to create a comprehensive long-term strategy to address the entrenched shortage of social, affordable and key worker housing and to undertake a review of the GROH program to improve coordination and responsiveness to regional housing needs. During the election campaign, Labor committed to a \$145 million Regional Housing Package, which includes;

- \$25 million Regional Housing Support Fund to provide grants to unlock and expedite housing delivery across regional WA; and
- \$104 million for the GROH new build program.

WALGA will reach out to the re-elected Labor Government to influence the delivery of the Housing Enabling Infrastructure Fund and the Regional Housing Package, including a call to work with the Local Government sector on the planning and delivery of capital investment programs, including ensuring Member views are considered in relation to critical housing needs.

ALGA is running a public, national election campaign on behalf of the Local Government sector including \$1.1 billion per year for enabling infrastructure to unlock housing supply. The Coalition has committed to a \$5 billion investment in enabling infrastructure. In December, the Australian and State Governments (Labor) committed to a \$105 million Housing Support Program which includes:

- \$50.6 million for Water Corporation infrastructure projects; and
- \$30.5 million for Western Power, DevelopmentWA and Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage projects that will deliver an estimated 4,565 residential lots and 19 social housing dwellings.

Introduction letters to incoming Ministers will provide the starting point for ongoing advocacy to both tiers of Government.

### **New Preferred Supplier Program**

The WALGA Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) includes a Construction and Built Environments Panel (PSP012) which has 35 qualified builders available to Members when undertaking building projects. Included are a range of Preferred Suppliers able to deliver quality modular and prefabricated dwellings. The PSP offers Members a simplified procurement option whereby they can save time and money – the PSP is a recognised tender exemption under the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996* and WALGA has legally drafted contract templates available for Members to use with this Panel. For further information on using the PSP for housing projects contact WALGA Contract Manager, Craig Grant, on <a href="mailto:cgrant@walga.asn.au">cgrant@walga.asn.au</a> or 9213 2037.

### **Audit**

The meeting highlighted the following requirements.

- Define consistent requirements
- Request transparency on audit fees
- Provision of scope in time to allow Local Governments to gather the required information

In 2024, WALGA wrote to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations advising of concerns in respect to audit fee increases and also that the scope of 'financial' audits now appears to cover a whole range of issues such as non-financial policies and information technology services.

WALGA has continued to advocate as follows:

WALGA advocate to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to reform the audit process for Local Governments by seeking:



- 1. Audits of Local Governments are completed and reported on in a timely manner and that the processes, procedures and scope of audits are consistently applied.
- 2. That the OAG review the requirements for pre-audit information with a view to reducing the need for additional information where possible;
- 3. That the OAG review their costing formulae for Local Government audits and show constraint in audit cost increases;
- 4. 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;
- 5. That auditors be required to improve their communication and information management and avoid repeated requests for information that has already been provided or that is publicly available;
- 6. That Local Governments only be required to communicate with contract Auditors (unless the OAG is directly auditing the Local Government) and the onus be placed on the contract Auditors to confirm their advice with the OAG before instructing the Local Government; and
- 7. Seek an opportunity for Local Government to make representations in relation to any adverse findings prior to the publication of the report.

WALGA and LG Professionals have recently circulated the third annual audit of the performance of the audit process. Results will be collated and an item will be included in the June round of Zone meetings.

### **Provision of Medical services**

The WALGA Local Government Primary Healthcare Survey Report has now been finalised. Tony Brown shared the report via email with all CEOs in January, including the invitation to be involved in the advocacy that would build on the Report findings. The report is also available on the WALGA website <a href="here">here</a>. WALGA has developed an advocacy strategy that focuses on Local Government sector specific issues within the broader rural healthcare reform agenda. The advocacy strategy aims to:

- Increase awareness of the support Local Governments are providing to support GP services and the opportunity cost consequences;
- Secure the implementation of a Local Government Primary Healthcare program to support and reimburse sector costs;
- Raise awareness of the need to increase the funding and revise the formula for the medical facilities adjustor within the Financial Assistance Grants;
- Influence ALGA to elevate rural health access to a priority issue;
- Support Local Government members to advocate on local and regional GP support issues; and
- Increase sector awareness of supports and guidance for Local Governments that choose to invest in GP services.

The strategy includes targeted actions towards the Australian and State Governments, aligned to their roles within the provision of healthcare services as well as identifying mechanisms for policy collaboration such as the renegotiation of the National Health Reform Agreement in mid-2025.

Health is a key issue in both the 2025 Federal and WA State Elections. At the State level, the returning Labor Government has committed to:

- 53% boost to the PATS fuel subsidy and \$34 million to expand service eligibility;
- \$30 million in health initiatives for the Mid West, including \$7.5 million in operational funding to relocate the RFDS' Mid-West base from Meekatharra to Geraldton;
- \$30 million in additional health initiatives for the Kimberley; and
- \$16.3 million package to boost paramedic services in the Peel and South-West regions.

In the Federal election, Labor has commitment to a 10-year \$8.5 billion funding increase to bulk billing, increased nursing scholarships and GP training programs and an increase to the Federal



funding for state public hospitals to 45% of the cost of care. The Liberal commitment includes regional health worker attraction, recruitment and retention initiatives. Similarly, the Nationals commitment includes increasing incentives and opportunities for medical professionals to train, live and work in the regions. Access to rural health is a key pillar in the <u>WALGA Federal Election</u> Priorities.

WALGA leveraged the increased media attention on access to healthcare ahead of the State election to write an opinion piece in the West Australian (attached) and continues to support regional Member advocacy efforts.

Introduction letters to incoming Ministers will provide the starting point for ongoing advocacy to both tiers of Government. In addition, WALGA is also supporting Members to put forward an ALGA motion on the subject and working with Rural Health West on increasing sector awareness of existing supports and guidance.

### **Financial Assistance Grants**

The meeting identified the following issues:

- ALGA 1% of taxation revenue advocacy to Federal Government
- Timing of funding quarterly
- LRCIP use this formula for capital works
- Uncompetitive program for capital works
- Consistency of timing
- Pre-payment forgive and start again, then guarterly payments
- Compliance clarity of what they are

WALGA has requested that ALGA seek further information from the Federal Government about the timing and phasing of the Financial Assistance Grant payments. ALGA was informed that no decision has been made at this time and that there is some uncertainty this year with the upcoming Federal election. ALGA will continue to request early engagement and seek further information from the Government.

# The West Australian

Opinion Health

### **OPINION**

Karen Chappel: Local councils can't keep picking up the slack on health

**Karen Chappel** The West Australian

Sat, 15 February 2025 2:00AM — Comments



Karen Chappel. Credit: Peter Aquilina/RegionalHUB



Every Australian, no matter where they call home, should have equal access to primary health care services.



Yet, our current health care system is letting down millions of Australians, with the impact disproportionately felt by those living in rural, regional, and remote areas, including more than 500,000 here in Western Australia.

People living in rural, regional and remote areas have poorer health outcomes compared to those in the metropolitan area.

### **ADVERTISEMENT**



HEALTH •

# HMC Capital interested in taking over Healthscope hospitals

**Cheyanne Enciso** 

They face higher rates of hospitalisations, deaths, and injuries.

They suffer more from preventable, chronic illnesses, and are more likely to manage multiple long-term health conditions than those in metropolitan areas.

They wait longer to get a GP appointment.

This disparity is unacceptable.

Accessing medical care in these regions is a challenge. Many communities only have access to a part-time GP, or in some cases, a nursing post. In other areas, basic medical care can only be accessed by travelling long distances — sometimes more than 100km.

The shortage of GPs in the regions has placed additional pressure on hospital emergency departments. More than half of presentations to emergency departments in rural WA are non-urgent cases, which could have been addressed by a GP if one was available.



Karen Chappel, Credit: Jeff Henderson/RegionalHUB

The Commonwealth Government holds the reins when it comes to national health policy and funding general practice through Medicare. However, the failure of the current system has increasingly forced local governments to step in to ensure their communities have access to essential health services.

According to WALGA's local government primary health care services survey, 69 local governments spent \$6.8 million in 2021-22 to support primary health care in their communities. This support includes funding for accommodation, vehicles, and even financial assistance for GP surgeries that would be otherwise nonviable. This burden falls heavily on smaller communities, with the bulk of support for GP services provided by local governments with populations between 1000 and 5000.

This responsibility should not fall on local governments. This situation is stretching councils' budgets thin, diverting funds from other essential community services and infrastructure. They cannot, and should not, have to shoulder this cost.

As we approach the Federal and State elections, fixing the healthcare system will be a significant part of the debate. Both WA Labor and the Opposition have made various commitments aimed at improving health care in regional areas. While these promises are well-intentioned, they will not address the underlying problems within the health system.

We need the State and the Commonwealth to come together and take decisive action to fix the system.

According to the National Rural Health Alliance, there is a national rural health spending deficit of \$6.5 billion. The incoming governments must bridge this divide. We need system-wide, long-term reforms that ensure equitable provision of general practice and primary healthcare for regional, rural, and remote communities. This includes developing adequate funding models and implementing effective workforce planning, recruitment, and retention strategies.

In 2025, the Australian and all State and Territory governments will sit down to renegotiate the National Health Reform Agreement. This is the ideal opportunity to work together to achieve better outcomes for regional communities and alleviate the pressure on local governments to step in.

By tackling these issues head-on, we make sure that all Australians, regardless of where they live, have access to the primary healthcare services they need and deserve.

Karen Chappel is the president of the WA Local Government Association

# Get the latest news from thewest.com.au in your inbox.

**SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAILS** 

Comments My Profile

The West Australian values your comments but kindly requests all posts are on topic, constructive and respectful. This conversation is being moderated. Please review our <u>community guidelines</u> before joining the discussion.

From: Bill Price
To: Chantelle Pedrotti

**Subject:** FW: 2025 Determination for Local Government CEOs and Elected Council Members

Date: Wednesday, 9 April 2025 2:50:30 PM

From: Submissions <Submissions@sat.wa.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, April 4, 2025 12:17 PM

To: Submissions < Submissions@sat.wa.gov.au>

**Subject:** 2025 Determination for Local Government CEOs and Elected Council Members

**OFFICIAL** 

Good afternoon,

Today, the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal issued its 2025 <u>Determination</u> for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Council Members.

As outlined in the preamble of the Determination, the Tribunal applied an increase of 4% (inclusive of superannuation) to CEO remuneration band ranges and an increase of 3.5% to the fee band ranges and some allowances for elected council members, with effect from 1 July 2025.

The Tribunal resolved that in the latter half of 2025 a comprehensive survey of local governments is to be conducted, following which a wide-ranging review (in consultation with the sector) will be undertaken of the banding framework and allowances.

Your participation in the survey is strongly encouraged in order for the Tribunal to gain meaningful data and insights into the issues faced by local governments.

If you have any questions, please contact the secretariat on 08 6557 7000 or submissions@sat.wa.gov.au.

Kind regards

### **Salaries and Allowances Tribunal**

**OFFICIAL** 

Bill Price Chief Executive Officer

41 Wolfram Street, WESTONIA WA 6423

Phone: (08) 9046 7063 Fax: (08) 9046 7001

Email: ceo@westonia.wa.gov.au Website: www.westonia.wa.gov.au

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this email (including attachments) is intended only for the use of the person(s) to whom it is addressed as it may be confidential and contain legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient you are hereby notified that any perusal, use, distribution, copying or disclosure is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error, please immediately advise us by return email and delete the email document.



Dear valued stakeholder

### **PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM**

As you may have seen on Monday, 31 March 2025, the Premier announced reform of some public sector agencies to align with his vision for the future of Western Australia (WA).

This involves nine departments out of a total of 25 and includes the Department of Communities (Communities).

The reform is designed to drive the Government's goals of job creation through economic diversification, local manufacturing and energy transition. It supports the delivery of hospitals and other major infrastructure; and building houses across WA - and brings together public sector expertise to achieve this.

Taking effect on 1 July 2025, the reform includes moving responsibility for all of Communities' housing functions, including the Housing Authority, to the new Department of Housing and Works.

The Office of Homelessness will stay with Communities supporting the recently appointed Minister for Homelessness.

Communities will also continue to support the Early Years Partnership and retain the Education and Care Regulatory Unit (ECRU) as a regulatory function.

I would like to assure you that it will be business as usual while this reform is being implemented.

Our agency's people and teams will continue to work with you based on our existing arrangements and contracts to provide responsive services that build safe, inclusive and empowered communities.

The implementation of the reform and transition of our housing services will be closely managed by both me and the Director General Department of Finance. Ms Jodi Cant, alongside representatives from the Public Sector Commission, the Department of Treasury and the CPSU/CSA.

As many of you will have heard me say, I have been pleased to see connected, person centred and local decision-making for our housing clients, as many are being supported across multiple areas of the department, and I know these efforts will continue after 1 July.

For more information about the broader changes, you can visit the Public Sector Reform 2025 page.

I want to thank you in advance for your support and I in turn commit to being as open and transparent with you, our key stakeholders, during this transition.

Yours sincerely

Mike Rowe

**Director General** 

04 April 2025

### Racing, Gaming and Liquor Alert

### Public Sector Reform

Today the Premier of Western Australia announced reform of some public sector agencies to align with his vision for the future of Western Australia.

Nine departments, out of a total of 25, are impacted, including the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC).

This reform aims to drive the Government's goals of job creation through economic diversification, local manufacturing and energy transition. It supports the delivery of hospitals and other major infrastructure; and building houses across WA – and brings together public sector expertise to achieve this.

This is about ensuring the public sector is fit for purpose in these globally uncertain times, so we are best placed to deliver on the government's goals and vision for the state.

A full overview of the reform is on WA.gov.au.

### From 1 July:

- DLGSC will be known as the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport.
- Our reshaped department includes the portfolios of Creative Industries, Tourism,
   Sport and Recreation, and Multicultural Interests, and relevant statutory authorities.
- The portfolios of Local Government, and Racing and Gaming (Liquor) will join the reshaped Department of Local Government, Commerce, Industry Regulation and Safety, which replaces DEMIRS. This agency will harness the expertise of regulators across the public service.
- The new names and the assigning of staff will commence on 1 July 2025.
- Full implementation of the reform including some of the more complex operational arrangements such as systems and accommodation – is expected by 1 January 2026.

I want to assure you that we are committed to delivering the services and programs of work for the Racing and Gaming (Liquor) portfolio, and aim to minimise disruption to delivery of existing services during this time.

We will provide updates on the transition and details on where to find information as the reform is implemented.

Lanie Chopping Director General