



President's Report

May 2018

Rural Fire Division

The long awaited announcement on a Rural Fire Division was made today by the Premier Mark McGowan and Emergency Services Minister Fran Logan.

In response to recommendations from the January 2016 Waroona Bushfire Special Inquiry, a new Rural Fire Division has been announced to increase the focus on bushfire management and volunteer relations.

The Rural Fire Division, based within DFES, will include the Office of Bushfire Risk Management, the Bushfire Risk Management Program and a newly created Bushfire Centre of Excellence. An overview introducing the Executive Director of the Rural Fire Division, Mr Murray Cater, can be found on the following website; <https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/newsandmedia/rfd/Documents/dfes-rfd-statements.pdf>

Bushfire Brigades remain with Local Governments, with current operational and management structures remaining the same.

The Rural Fire Division comes with significant investment including:

- \$15 million towards the Bushfire Risk Management Program to support local governments identify and manage bushfire risk.
- \$34.6 million has been committed to bushfire mitigation which improve the ability for identified risk management strategies to be implemented in communities.
- \$18 million for a Bushfire Centre of Excellence to enhance bushfire management practices across the State and provide a specialised facility for volunteers bushfire training.

Funding of these commitments will be achieved through an increase in the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) which will take effect July 1, 2018.

The Premier announced an increase of \$28 to the metropolitan ESL and increases of between \$8 and \$17 per annum across the four regional ESL categories will also be included in the 2018-19 State Budget.

In recognition of the Economic Regulation Authority review into the ESL, an ESL Referral and Grants Advisory Committee will be established to provide independent scrutiny and increase transparency around the ESL. This Committee will be made up of non-DFES appointees to provide independent advice to the Emergency Services Minister about how money is spent to ensure maximum value for all Western Australians.

The Association is seeking further information on the ESL components of the announcement, given the sector's responsibility for the collection of the ESL and being a recipient of Local Government Capital and Operating Grants to support Bushfire Volunteers.

Waste Taskforce created to combat China's recycling ban

Following advocacy from WALGA (through the Municipal Waste Advisory Council) and the waste industry, the Minister for the Environment has created a Taskforce to deal with the implications of China's National Sword Policy.

The Taskforce will provide advice directly to the Minister for Environment on management of the waste and recycling industry, following China's policy change

To help address the Chinese Government's import restrictions on recyclable waste, Environment Minister Stephen Dawson has established a taskforce to advise on waste management in Western Australia.

The Waste Taskforce was created following consultation with State and local governments, the waste industry and community stakeholders, with the group's first meeting anticipated during the week beginning on April 9, 2018.

The Taskforce will consider its objectives, scope and governance arrangements at its first meeting. It will provide advice on how to ensure Western Australia can weather the storm of the China decision - building on the State Government's commitment to improving waste and recycling performance.

The Taskforce will directly advise the Minister for Environment on recycling market issues and opportunities in WA. This advice will align with national actions to support recycling, the WA Waste Strategy and the promotion of the circular economy. A range of short, medium and long-term opportunities will be explored through the work of the Taskforce.

The Waste Taskforce will be chaired by Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Environment, Baldivis MLA Reece Whitby; and will include representatives from the Waste Authority and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation; local government and regional councils; the waste services and recycling industry; the packaging industry; Aboriginal and community groups; and key government agencies.

Local Government Act Review Process

The Local Government Act Review process is progressing. To date the Association has carried out a consultation process on a WALGA discussion paper, where positions were put forward on issues the sector would like considered in the review process. These positions were endorsed at State Council meeting held in December 2017 meeting. Following this there has been sector consultation on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries phase 1 consultation paper. Positions on the Departments paper were endorsed by State Council at the March 2018 meeting.

The Departments Steering Committee will be convening in early May 2018 to consider responses to the phase 1 consultation process.

We will keep the sector informed on any developments as this process progresses.

Ministerial Review of the State Industrial Relations System – Interim Report

The interim report of the Ministerial Review of the State Industrial Relations Review has recently been released for comment.

The Interim Report recommendations are suggesting that Local Government employers and employees be regulated by the State Industrial Relations system.

WALGA's original submission to the review opposed Local Governments being regulated by the State system based on member feedback and that 96% of all Local Government employees are covered by the Federal industrial relations system.

A submission opposing the Interim Reports recommendation that Local Government be regulated by the State industrial relations system is being finalised. WALGA's submission will also make comment on the proposed transition process as well as a range of other recommendations that will impact the Local Government sector.

WALGA Honours Program – Nominations Open

Nominations are now open for the 2018 WALGA Honours Program, which recognises and celebrates Local Government Elected Members and employees for their contribution to the Local Government sector, the Association, and the community.

Nominations should be submitted on the forms available on the WALGA website with supporting information by the closing date of 5:00pm, Friday, 11 May.

For more information, visit the Honours website, or contact Executive Officer Governance, Margaret Degebrod, on mdegebrod@walga.asn.au or (08) 9213 2036.

2018 ANZAC Day Award

The ANZAC Day Award recognises Local Government contribution to the promotion and facilitation of community involvement in ANZAC Day commemorative events and initiatives.

The Award Panel, which will consist of senior WALGA and RSLWA representatives, will consider:

- collaboration between the RSL and the Local Government in ensuring a successful commemoration
- innovation by the Local Government in ensuring continued relevance of ANZAC Day commemorations in community life, and
- involvement of the broader community, including young people, in ANZAC Day commemorations.

The Award will be presented during the WALGA Annual General Meeting held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday, 1 August.

Photographs and/or other imagery of the commemoration as well as statements from veterans, community members and third parties are encouraged.

The nomination form is available from: <http://walga.asn.au/Policy-Advice-and-Advocacy/Governance-and-Strategy/ANZAC-Day-Award.aspx?lang=en-AU&>

Nominations close on Friday, 1 June.

PRESIDENT'S CONTACTS

During the March - May period, contacts that have occurred or are scheduled to take place prior to the May State Council meeting are as follows:

State Government Relations:

- State Roads Funds to Local Government Advisory Committee

Local Government Relations

- ALGA Board Meeting
- LGIS Board Offsite Planning Day
- Lord Mayors Distress Relief Meeting
- Landcorp, Chairman Mr George McCullagh, CEO Mr Frank Marra
- Ms Nicole Lockwood, Ms Kellie Houlahan, Mr Mark Brownwell, Freight & Logistics Council
- Mr Richard Sellers, Mr Peter Woronzow, Dept of Transport

- Wheatbelt Conference 2018
- Pilbara/Kimberley Forum

Conferences / Workshops / Public Relations

- LGIS Key Partners Lunch
- Mayor & Presidents Forum
- WALGA RAP Launch
- The Hon. Kerry Sanderson Farewell Dinner
- Heather Henderson Freedom of The City Cocktail Function
- ANZAC Day Ceremony with RSL WA
- City of Swan 2018 Mayoral Dinner
- Members of Parliament Breakfast
- Pilbara/Kimberley Forum

Zone Meetings

- Central Metropolitan Zone
- Kimberley Country Zone
- Goldfields Esperance Country Zone