



Elected Member Prospectus

Becoming a Zone Delegate or State Councillor

About WALGA

WALGA is the Western Australian Local Government Association, formed in 2001 with the merging of the WA Municipal Association, Local Government Association of WA, Country Urban Councils Association, and Country Shire Councils Association.

WALGA is not a government department or agency; WALGA exists to advocate and negotiate on behalf of the WA Local Government sector in the best interests of its Member Councils.

What Does WALGA Do

WALGA aims to provide value to Member Local Governments by:

- Enhancing the capacity of Local Governments to deliver services;
- Building a positive profile for Local Government;
- Providing effective advocacy and leadership on behalf of the sector; and,
- Ensuring representation in the interests of Local Government in WA.

How Does WALGA Work

WALGA employs approximately 100 staff across the areas of:

- Policy portfolios including asset management, community, emergency management, environment, infrastructure, planning, roads and waste;
- Services and advice including governance, industrial relations, procurement, recruitment, supplier panels, tender management, and training for officers and Elected Members; and,
- Operational functions including events, finance, human resources, information technology, marketing and media management.

How is WALGA Funded

A number of components contribute to the WALGA operational budget. As with most member-based organisations, WALGA has an annual Membership fee paid by all Member Councils. To ensure fairness, the annual Membership fee is indexed to the size and capacity of each Local Government. It contributes less than 10 per cent of WALGA total turnover.

WALGA secures additional funding through: charges to State and Federal departments and agencies for the administration of grants; fee-for-services selected for use by Member Local Governments; and returns from supplier contracts as part of group buying arrangements that guarantee lowest market rates for Members.

Role of Zones

State Councillors are elected to State Council from one of 17 Zones, which are groupings of Local Governments convened together on the basis of population, commonalities of interest and geographical alignment.

The relationship between State Council and Zones within the Western Australian Local Government Association is a critical one in the political representation of Local Government at the State and Federal levels.

Zones have an integral role in shaping the political and strategic direction of WALGA. Not only are Zones responsible for bringing relevant local and regional issues to the State decision making table, they are a key player in developing policy and legislative initiatives for Local Government.

WALGA's Constitution outlines that the functions of Zones are to:

- Elect one or more State Councillors;
- Consider the State Council agenda;
- Provide direction and feedback to their State Councillor; and,
- Any other function deemed appropriate by the Zone.

Additional activities undertaken by Zones include:

- Developing and advocating on positions on regional issues affecting Local Government;
- Progressing regional Local Government initiatives;
- Identifying relevant issues for action by WALGA;
- Networking and information sharing; and,
- Contributing to policy development through policy forums and other channels.

Zones provide input into State Council's advocacy agenda in two critical ways: by passing resolutions on items contained in the State Council agenda, and by generating new agenda items for consideration by State Council.

Zone Motions

To generate new agenda items for consideration by State Council, a Zone may pass a resolution requesting that WALGA take action. For example, a Zone motion may request WALGA to investigate an issue, undertake advocacy, or develop policy.

It is best practice that Zone motions are submitted with the backing of a resolution of Council; however, as Zones are self-governing and autonomous, individual Zone delegates may submit motions for the Zone to consider.

It is recommended that the Zone be advised whether a motion to be considered has been endorsed by Council, or has been submitted by an individual Zone delegate.

Role of Zone Delegates

Zone delegates are elected or appointed to represent their Council on the Zone and make decisions on their Council's behalf at the regional level.

In fulfilling their role as Council's delegate, the Zone delegate should give regard to their Council's positions on policy issues.

There is also an expectation that Zone delegates will report back to their Council about decisions made by the Zone.

Role of State Council

WALGA is governed by a President and a 24 member State Council, elected from the Local Government sector.

Each State Councillor represents a WALGA Zone. There are 12 metropolitan zones and 12 regional zones. All 139 WA Local Governments are invited to be Members of WALGA and a zone.

Elected Members are able to nominate to represent their Local Government on their zone and in turn, through the zone election process, to represent the zone on State Council.

State Council's primary role is to govern the successful operation of WALGA and broadly includes:

- i. Strategy formulation and policy making;
- ii. Development, evaluation and succession of the Chief Executive Officer;
- iii. Monitoring financial management and performance, including the annual budget;
- iv. Monitoring and controlling compliance and organisational performance;
- v. Ensuring effective identification, assessment and management of risk;
- vi. Promoting ethical and responsible decision making;

- vii. Ensuring effective communication and liaison with members and stakeholders; and;
- viii. Ensuring an effective governance framework and culture.

Role of State Councillor

State Councillors have ultimate responsibility for the overall successful operations of WALGA.

The principal roles of State Councillors relate to:

- Policy positions and issues;
- The strategic direction of WALGA;
- Financial operations and solvency; and,
- All matters as prescribed by law.

State Councillors, as directors of a board, are required to act consistently in the “best interests of the organisation as a whole”. This effectively means that the duties of a State Councillor are owed to all Member Local Governments.

State Councillors are also expected to be ‘champions’ for WALGA and for the Local Government sector.

Commitment of the Role of State Councillor

State Councillors are expected to attend State Council meetings, of which there are six per year. As State Councillors are elected to State Council by their Zone, State Councillors would also be expected to attend and play a prominent role in Zone meetings, including reporting back to their Zone about WALGA’s activities and advocacy.

State Councillors are also expected to attend WALGA events and functions and play an active role in representing the Local Government sector, and contributing to policy debates and other forums.

State Council operates a number of internal and external committees and policy forums. There is an expectation that State Councillors play a leading role in serving on State Council’s committees on behalf of WALGA and the Local Government sector.

State Councillors are paid a sitting fee of \$3,500 per annum and expenses incurred to attend State Council meetings are reimbursable.

Opportunities for State Councillors

State Councillors, as board members of WALGA, are key leaders in the Local Government sector in Western Australia. Not only do State Councillors represent their community on their Council, they also have the opportunity to represent their region (Zone) and the Local Government sector at the state level.

All State Councillors will be appointed to a Policy Team or the Finance and Services Committee. Policy Teams provide State Councillors with hands-on exposure to development of policy positions and submissions to Government on behalf of the Local Government sector in WA. The Chair of the relevant Policy Team will also have the opportunity to attend meetings with Government Ministers to advocate on behalf of Local Government.

There is also the potential for State Councillors, as Local Government leaders in WA, to play a role in supporting and mentoring other Elected Members, either informally or through WALGA's Member Advisor Program.

Become Involved

We hope that involvement in your Association – by representing your Council on the Zone, or representing your Zone on State Council – will be an enriching and rewarding experience.

Consider nominating for a position on the Zone or State Council and you play a role in shaping policy and advocacy on behalf of Local Government in Western Australia!

Contacts

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