



Department of  
**Local Government, Sport  
and Cultural Industries**

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Mr Mike Rowe  
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Department of Water and Environmental Regulation  
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Dear Mike

**CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES PAPER SUBMISSION**

The Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries (the department) supports the State Government developing a public policy on climate change.

Please find attached the department's submission to the climate change issues paper.

If you have any further inquiries regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Yvette Peterson, Manager Local Government Policy and Engagement on 0434 071 752 or by email [yvette.peterson@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:yvette.peterson@dlgsc.wa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Duncan Ord OAM  
Director General

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## 1. Climate change and Local Government

Climate change is a key issue for local governments that impacts almost all aspects of their operations and responsibilities. As the level of government closest to the community, local government manages and plans for a range of impacts of climate change, including on community assets, disruption of council services, unbudgeted financial impacts and adverse health impacts on residents. There continues to be significant uncertainty for local governments around potential legal liability flowing from climate change effects, actions taken (or not taken) in relation to these effects, and how planning laws, schemes and policies mesh with climate change issues.

Local governments have, for a number of years, been actively engaged in a range of climate change mitigation and adaptation, together with education and encouraging awareness and behaviour change amongst residents<sup>1</sup>. This action is seen to go hand in hand with local governments' responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 1995* (WA), in particular:

*In carrying out its functions a local government is to use its best endeavours to meet the needs of current and future generations through an integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity.* (Section 1.3(3))

### State Local Government Partnership Agreement

Signed in 2017, the State Local Government Partnership Agreement is an ongoing engagement mechanism between the state government and local government to inform and influence policy reform that impacts on the business of government. It provides a framework for better alignment with government strategy and a forum to discuss investment prioritisation and identification of collective opportunities to meet mutual outcomes. Currently key focus areas include climate change, waste management, planning reform, *Our priorities*<sup>2</sup> and the development of a shared vision for local government.

The agreement is governed by a Partnership Group comprising of;

- Premier;
- Treasurer;
- Minister for Local Government;
- Minister for Planning/Transport;
- WALGA President;
- LG Professionals President;

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<sup>1</sup> See for example WALGA's local government climate change project map: <http://walga.asn.au/Policy-Advice-and-Advocacy/Environment/Climate-Change/Local-Government-Project-Map.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> *Our priorities: sharing prosperity* is the State Government's approach to address key priorities of the community that seem unsolvable. These are not just the responsibility of one department, one portfolio or even Government alone. Through the State Local Government Partnership Agreement, local and state government will work on these ambitious targets.

- Others as appropriate to the subject matter on the agenda.

and a Working Group;

- WALGA CEO;
- LG Professionals CEO;
- State Directors General as appropriate to the subject matter on the agenda

In 2020, the Partnership will be reviewed, and it is envisaged that Climate Change will continue to be a key focus area that local and state government can collectively work towards and align efforts to generate maximum impact for Western Australian communities.

#### National Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP)

Funds have successfully been secured through the NDRP (Commonwealth funding program) to undertake the *Resilient Councils – preparing for impacts of climate change* project.

The project is aimed at assisting local governments to strengthen their critical governance frameworks for climate resilience planning and decision making in relation to increased incidence and severity of natural disasters related to climate change. A consultant will shortly be engaged to work with the project partners in the delivery of the project.

WALGA is being supported to deliver the project through funding and collaboration with the department, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and Local Government Insurance Scheme (LGIS)

#### The project outputs are:

- a) Desktop assessment of each local government
- b) Assessment results for each local government
- c) Aggregated WA local government sector assessment results made available to each Local Government
- d) Guidance materials produced for local governments, based on desktop assessment findings and identified needs.
- e) Data to inform the development of the State Climate Policy currently under development, and development of potential climate change work stream under the State Local Government Partnership Agreement.

#### Expected outcomes:

- a) Better understanding of the impacts of climate change on local governments

- b) Local governments more informed about climate change
- c) Improved adaptation and resilience planning (as endorsed by local government in the WALGA Climate Change Policy Statement).
- d) Improved understanding, and evidence base for, the degree to which climate change adaptation and emergency management is incorporated into local government governance.
- e) WA local governments that are better prepared to deal with natural disasters which are likely to be more frequent and extreme as a result of a changing climate.

*\*\*The Emergency Services Act Review is being coordinated by DFES and will amalgamate the Fire Brigades Act 1942, Bush Fires Act 1954 and the Fire & Emergency Services Act 1998. The aim of the Review is to create a single comprehensive Emergency Services Act which will improve community safety and better support all emergency services in the future. The legislation is currently awaiting drafting priority and is critical for local government to ensure the correct powers and mechanisms are available for mitigation and community preparedness.*

#### Planning and reporting – Local Government Act

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) gives local governments a framework for establishing local priorities and linking this information to operational functions. All local governments are currently required to produce a 'plan for the future' under s. 5.56 (1) of the Act. Under the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*, a plan for the future requires a strategic community plan and a corporate business plan.

The strategic community plan is the council's principal ten-year strategy and planning document that reflects the community's aspirations for the long and medium term. It includes a clear definition of the council's strategic priorities, intentions for asset management and service delivery, and resourcing implications over the ten-year period.

The strategic community plan is structured with the local government's choice of strategic framework. Usually this will include outcome areas of social, economic and environmental wellbeing, and good governance. A long-term financial profile should be included, and the strategic risks considered in the plan.

The corporate business plan is the council's four-year planning document. It gives effect to the first four years of the strategic community plan and is pivotal in ensuring that the medium-term commitments are both strategically aligned and affordable. It is vital that the local government and the community consider and balance the list of desires that may be expressed in the strategic plan with the means of funding these.

Reform of the IPR framework and process is currently being considered as part of the Act review. Areas for reform include the planning cycle and how this could be integrated with other local government and State Government processes, the reporting requirements of local governments, and the level of community engagement and council member involvement in the IPR process.

Western Australian Local Government Association

The department would like to acknowledge the WALGA Climate Change Policy Statement and supports the following key areas of concern for local government;

- a) Accelerated action and fast-tracked reform to remove regulatory barriers and facilitate the transition to a low carbon, energy efficient economy.

Local Governments are already active in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, but State level regulations continue to hamper Local Governments from undertaking or supporting a range of high impact cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, including LED street lighting retrofits, large scale renewable energy projects and community energy projects.

- b) A State level emissions reduction target and/or renewable energy target.

WALGA and the department acknowledge that the Western Australian Government has recently joined other States in setting a science-based emissions reduction target of net zero emissions by 2050. It is essential that the development of a State-wide climate change policy charts an achievable and credible emissions reduction pathway for the State to meet the target.

- c) Planning for climate proof communities (including funding for innovative climate change projects)

The department and WALGA consider it is essential that all levels of Government work in partnership to build healthy, resilient communities by ensuring that climate change considerations (both mitigation and adaptation) are embedded in Government programs, policies and regulations. A key aspect of this is a State planning regime that adequately incorporates climate change in planning policies, along with related environmental issues such as urban forestry, biodiversity, water security and emergency management.

- d) Comprehensive, effective adaptation planning

It is recognised that planning around coastal adaptation is currently occurring, but effective planning needs to take in comprehensive identification of, and response to, the effects of climate

change. It also needs to identify and incorporate other effects of climate change such as heat waves and other extreme weather events, bush fire planning and water management.

## **2. Climate Change and Sport and Recreation**

### *Climate change framework*

In 2007, the then Department of Sport and Recreation compiled a climate change framework for the industry. The framework helps sport and recreation organisations and individuals understand the implications of climate change and takes them through a series of steps to help their organisation consider how climate change will affect them. In 2012 an Environmental Sustainability Pack was also created. To ensure the industry is adaptive and responsive to any further challenges coming its way it would be prudent to update these documents. The document can be found at; <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/departments/publications/publication/environmental-sustainability-pack>

## **3. Climate Change, Social Infrastructure and Services**

The department has responsibility for maintaining 65 cultural buildings providing a range of services to the culture and arts sector. These buildings, and the services they offer, are at risk from the impacts of climate change and therefore funding is required for the development and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The department has responsibility for maintaining and operating five recreation camps (four in the Metropolitan area and one in Albany). The camps assets require additional funding to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Portfolio agencies such as Venues West and the Perth Theatre Trust own and operate significant infrastructure portfolios that will require funding to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Local government owns and operates social infrastructure that provides significant positive community health and well-being outcomes through the services provided. This infrastructure, including Public Open Space, needs to be protected against the impacts of climate change to ensure community health and well-being outcomes are not negatively impacted.

## **4. What can the department do?**

- effectively showcase awareness and behaviour change strategies;
- provide climate change education opportunities at state owned infrastructure;

- implement best practice climate change adaption and mitigation strategies through delivery of state-owned infrastructure;
- share data to aid in decision making, for example the Coastal Recreation Usage Study which maps all the recreation activities on the coastal strip in the metropolitan area to allow planning for sea level rise and the protection of these highly valuable community resources;
- enhance approaches to procurement and grant investments to ensure climate mitigation is prioritised and that climate adaptation is appropriately considered;
- continue to implement technologies and systems to reduce energy consumption in department buildings;
- increase supply of energy from renewable sources in department buildings;
- reduce water consumption in buildings through the capture and re-use of wastewater;
- ensure all new buildings are readily accessible by public transport;
- repurpose or upgrade heritage buildings to ensure they continue to support service delivery;
- locate new buildings away from flood prone areas.