GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of **Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety**



Local Government Advisory Board

2025–26 Annual Report

Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation & Safety

Locked Bag 14 Cloisters Square Perth WA 6850

Email: advisoryboard@lgirs.wa.gov.au

Website: www.lgirs.wa.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) – Telephone: 13 14 50

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Email: communication@lgirs.wa.gov.au

Acknowledgement of country and peoples

LGIRS acknowledges the Aboriginal people throughout Western Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands, waters, and communities in which we operate. LGIRS is committed to developing strong working relationships with Aboriginal people and is proud to celebrate the cultural diversity, strength and resilience of Aboriginal people, and is deeply grateful for the contributions they make to the State of Western Australia. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal people and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

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Contents

Chair's Report 3

Role and function of the Board 5

Minister responsible 5
Ministerial Statement of Expectation 5
Local Government Advisory Board Statement of Intent 5

The Board's guiding principles 6

1. Community of interests 6
2. Physical and topographic features 6
3. Demographic trends 6
4. Economic factors 7
5. History of the area 7
6. Transport and communication 7
7. Matters affecting the viability of local governments 7
8. Effective delivery of local government services 8

Membership of the Board 9

Member profiles (as of 30 June 2026) 10
Expiry of terms of office –2025-26 12

The year in review – Board activities 2025-26 13

District boundary amendment proposals considered by the Board 13
Ward and representation amendment proposals considered by the Board 13
Governance of the Board 13

Other information 15

More information 16

Chair's Report

On behalf of the Local Government Advisory Board (Board), I am pleased to present the 2025-26 annual report.

In 2025–26, the Board met on only a handful of occasions due to a limited number of proposals. After a prolonged process, the Board was however pleased to see the finalisation of the boundary amendment which ensured that the Ocean Reef Marina was included as part of the City of Joondalup's boundaries. Whilst a relatively minor impact in terms of size and electors, this was a key change to allow the application of relevant laws within the precinct.

The Board also engaged in various discussions amongst itself, relating to amalgamations in response to significant media and local government interest. Amalgamations and significant boundary amendments are generally infrequent but experience occasional periods of interest. The Board welcomes discussions with any stakeholders to help provide advice and guidance should they wish to understand the process requirements.

I wish to extend my thanks to the Board members and deputy members. While we have had a reduced workload this year, the Board members have continued to make themselves available to meet and provide insightful and valuable input into discussions when required.

Several Board members will see their terms expire early in the next financial year. I would like to recognise the contributions of Cr Russ Fishwick and Mr Anthony Vuleta who will finish their respective terms with the Board after reaching their 10-year maximum tenure. Their knowledge and input over a long period of time have been significant and will be greatly missed by the Board. Similarly, Joanne Abbiss will also finish with the Board. While appointed for a shorter period, Joanne's input, particularly into the governance of the Board, was highly valuable.

I would also like to acknowledge Ms Amy Halliday, the former Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety representative, who ceased as a member of the Board in July 2025. While I only worked with Amy for a short time, she contributed strongly to the Board particularly ensuring the timely handling of matters previously when there was no Chair appointed.

While the Board will be losing significant experience, I look forward to welcoming our new members. As experienced local government practitioners and with a range of different professional backgrounds, I am sure the new members will provide a number of different perspectives.

Finally, I express my appreciation to the executive support staff, who have diligently supported the Board this year with accurate and timely information. Their efforts enable the Board to operate to the highest standard.

As we head into an election year, the Board is ready to deal with any ward and representation proposals from proponents wanting to implement changes ahead of the 2027 local government elections. I encourage any local governments considering

changes to consult with their community appropriately as part of any proposals and ensure they are submitted to the Board before 31 January 2027 for administrative steps to be completed.



Ms. Carol Adams OAM

Chair
Local Government Advisory Board
02 August 2026

Role and function of the Board

The Local Government Advisory Board (Board) is a statutory body established under section 2.44 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (Act).

The role of the Board is to consider proposals for changes to district boundaries, ward and representation structures of local governments. These proposals can be initiated by the Minister for Local Government (Minister), local governments or electors.

After the Board has considered a proposal, it makes a recommendation to the Minister about the proposal. The Minister has the option to either accept or reject the recommendation.

The Board can also carry out other inquiries as directed by the Minister, in accordance with the Act.

Minister responsible

The Hon Hannah Beazley MLA – Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth; Gascoyne.

Ministerial Statement of Expectation

The purpose of the June 2021 Ministerial Statement of Expectation by Minister John Carey is to provide clarity on the roles, values, and objectives necessary to support an effective relationship between the Minister and the Board. The Statement covers the following topics:

- good governance
- ethical behaviour and conflicts of interest
- performance management
- appointments
- government policies and objectives
- financial management
- communication.

Local Government Advisory Board Statement of Intent

The Board responded to Minister Carey's Statement of Expectation with a Statement of Intent in August 2021, which outlines how the Minister's expectations will be implemented.

The Board's guiding principles

The Board's guiding principles form the basis for the consideration of any changes to local government boundaries and consider eight factors set out in the Act, as detailed below. Other relevant factors may also be considered by the Board.

1. Community of interests

Community of interests include parts of a district that share common interests, values, characteristics and issues giving rise to a separate sense of identity or community. Factors contributing to a sense of identity or community include shared interests and shared use of community facilities. For example, sporting, leisure and library facilities create a focus for the community.

The use of shopping areas and the location of schools also act to draw people together with similar interests. This can also give an indication about the direction that people travel to access services and facilities. The external boundaries of a local government need to reflect distinct communities of interest wherever possible.

Neighbourhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure and often generate a feeling of community and belonging. The Board considers that wherever possible, it is inappropriate to divide the units between local governments.

2. Physical and topographic features

Physical and topographic features may be either natural or man-made and vary from area to area. They may include:

- water features (such as rivers)
- catchment boundaries
- coastal plains and foothills
- parks and reserves
- man-made features (such as railway lines or freeways).

These features can form identifiable boundaries and can also act as barriers to movement between adjoining areas. In many cases, physical and topographic features are appropriate district and ward boundaries. The Board supports local government structures and boundaries that facilitate the integration of human activity and land use.

3. Demographic trends

Local governments should consider the following characteristics when determining the demographics within their locality:

- population size
- population trends
- distribution by age
- gender
- occupation.

Current and projected population factors are also relevant, as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government.

4. Economic factors

Economic factors can include anything that reflects the range of economic activities and resources in the area, including:

- industries within the local area
- distribution of community assets
- infrastructure.

5. History of the area

The history of an area can be a relevant consideration, although the Board believes that in most cases it will not be a primary justification for changing or retaining local governments and local government boundaries. The nature of historical ties between communities is important to understand, irrespective of where the local government boundaries lie.

A community within a local government may have a strong historical identity. Alternatively, there may be strong historical links between two or more communities in adjacent local governments. It is important to note that historical identity is not lessened if an area does not have its own local government.

6. Transport and communication

The transport and communication linkages between towns and other areas may be a significant barrier to movement and, therefore, an appropriate boundary between local governments.

The following factors are important in any assessment of local government boundaries:

- port access
- neighbouring towns
- railways
- major roads.

7. Matters affecting the viability of local governments

A local government should have a significant resource base to:

- be able to exercise its proper functions and delegated powers and operate facilities and services efficiently and effectively
- be flexible and responsive in exercising its functions and powers, and operating its facilities and services
- employ appropriate professional expertise and skills
- be capable of embracing micro-economic reform.

Each local government should have a diverse and sufficient rate base to ensure that general-purpose grants do not represent the major revenue source.

8. Effective delivery of local government services

A broad range of factors can be relevant to the effective delivery of local government services, and these are often directly relevant to those that also affect the viability of local governments. They include:

- the size and geographical spread of the population
- management effectiveness and efficiency
- the availability of staff expertise
- appropriate infrastructure and equipment
- customer satisfaction and feedback.

Membership of the Board

The Advisory Board consists of 5 members appointed by the Minister.

The legislation previously required the Minister for Local Government to request nominations of suitable individuals from the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety, WA Local Government Association (WALGA) and LG Professionals WA (LG Pro) for positions on the Board. Under legislative amendments, this is no longer the case.

Members are now nominated for appointment directly by the Minister for Local Government. They are required to be persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, have knowledge and experience relevant to local government.

The Minister designates:

- a member to be the chairperson of the Advisory Board; and
- another member to be deputy chairperson of the Advisory Board.

There is also a deputy for each of the positions other than the Chairperson. A person can only be appointed as a deputy for a member if they are eligible to be appointed to the office of that member.

As a Tier B board, all appointments are approved by Cabinet on the recommendation of the Minister. The Board membership as of 30 June 2026 was as follows:

Name	Position	Nominated by[1]	Current term started	Current term ends
Ms Carol Adams OAM	Chairperson	Minister for Local Government	10 December 2024	31 August 2027
VACANT	Deputy Chairperson	Minister for Local Government		
VACANT	Deputy to the Deputy Chairperson	Minister for Local Government		
Mr Anthony Vuleta	Member	LG Pro	10 December 2024	31 August 2026
Cr Russ Fishwick JP	Member	WALGA	10 December 2024	31 August 2026
Cr Caroline Knight	Member	WALGA	10 December 2024	31 August 2027
Ms Joanne Abbiss	Deputy to Anthony Vuleta	LG Pro	10 December 2024	31 August 2026

[1] It is noted under the amended legislation; all members are now nominated by the Minister for Local Government. As several current members were appointed under the previous legislation, their nominating bodies are included for information.

Name	Position	Nominated by[1]	Current term started	Current term ends
Mayor Alison Xamon	Deputy to Russ Fishwick	WALGA	10 December 2024	31 August 2026
Cr Jannah Stratford	Deputy to Caroline Knight	WALGA	10 December 2024	31 August 2027

Member profiles (as of 30 June 2026)

Ms Carol Adams OAM - Chair

Carol Adams was appointed as the Chair of the Local Government Advisory Board (LGAB) in December 2024, with her present term running until 31 August 2027.

Carol holds a Bachelor of Laws and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Carol practiced law for several years before transitioning to a full-time role as Mayor of the City of Kwinana in 2011. Her journey in local government began in May 1997 when she was first elected to the Council, and she served as Mayor from 2006 until October 2023.

Her extensive experience includes serving on numerous boards and committees, such as the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, WA Local Government State Council, South Metropolitan TAFE Governing Council, Local Government Superannuation Board, Local Government Grants Commission, and the WAPC Statutory Planning Committee. Currently, Carol is the Chair of the WA Turf Club (trading as Perth Racing) and recently appointed as the inaugural Monitor for the Local Government Inspectorate.

In recognition of her significant contributions across numerous areas, Carol was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (General Division) in 2019, the Freedom of the City of Kwinana in November 2023 and in August 2024 Carol was awarded the prestigious Local Government Medal for her outstanding service to the local government sector.

Mr Anthony Vuleta – Member

Anthony Vuleta has been a member of the Board since 2016, with his current term ending 31 August 2026. In June 2024, he was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the City of Kalamunda. Prior to this role, Anthony served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Town of Victoria Park from 2014. He is also an active member and the current President of the LG Professionals WA Board. Anthony's previous leadership roles include serving as the President of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (WA) and being a member of the Burswood Park Board.

Cr Russ Fishwick JP – Member

Russ Fishwick has been a member of the Board since 2016, with his current term finishing 31 August 2026. With over 40 years of experience as a local government officer, Russ has previously served as the Executive Manager of Governance and Acting Chief Executive Officer at the Town of Victoria Park. He has been a councillor at the City of Joondalup since 2006, serving three terms as Deputy Mayor.

Russ chaired the Mindarie Regional Council for 10 years, is a WALGA Life Member, was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 2010 and was recently also appointed as a Presiding Member of the Housing Appeals Tribunal. He holds postgraduate qualifications in business and management. Russ is also actively involved in surf lifesaving, serving as a Senior Assessor for Surf Lifesaving WA.

Cr Caroline Knight – Member

Caroline Knight has been a member of the Board since October 2021, with her current term extending until August 2027. Caroline is a current Councillor at the City of Mandurah, having also had previous terms as Deputy Mayor and Mayor. She is the Deputy Chair of the Peron Naturaliste Partnership and chairs the Mandurah Environmental Advisory Group. Additionally, Caroline was appointed as a Commissioner of the WA Planning Commission in 2022 and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Ms Joanne Abbiss – Deputy member to Anthony Vuleta

Joanne Abbiss is an accomplished Chief Executive Officer with over 20 years of experience shaping the future of Western Australia's fastest growing local governments. She holds a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) from Notre Dame University and a Bachelor of Science (Distinction) from Curtin University. As CEO of the City of Armadale, Joanne oversees a $130 million annual operating budget, $30 million in capital works, $1.6 billion in assets and a workforce of more than 700 staff serving over 100,000 residents.

Her leadership spans strategic infrastructure delivery, economic development, environmental sustainability, social policy and community engagement. She has held ministerial appointments to State boards and advisory committees, contributed to local government reform, and has been recognised internationally for her achievements in strategic planning. Joanne has extensive expertise in governance and public administration and is a sought-after speaker on leadership and organisational transformation. In 2015, she was named WA Telstra Business Woman of the Year (Government and Academia).

Mayor Alison Xamon – Deputy member to Russ Fishwick

Mayor Alison Xamon was appointed as a Deputy member to Cr Russ Fishwick, with a term expiring 31 August 2026. Alison is the Mayor of the City of Vincent having been elected in October 2023 and is also a Councillor with the Mindarie Regional Council and the Catalina Regional Council. Alison is involved with several internal and external

local government committees, including the Central Perth Redevelopment Committee.

Alison is a lawyer and a former State Member of Parliament having served as the Member for both the East and the North Metropolitan Regions in the Legislative Council.

Cr Jannah Stratford – Deputy member to Caroline Knight

Jannah Stratford was first appointed as a Deputy Member of the Board in October 2021, with her current term expiring on 31 August 2027. She serves as the President of the Shire of Koorda, a position she has held since 2020, following two years as a councillor. Jannah has previously chaired the North-Eastern Wheatbelt Region of Councils (NEWROC) and continues to contribute to her community as a member of the Local Health Advisory Committee. She is also actively involved in a range of local sporting and community organisations within the Shire of Koorda.

Expiry of terms of office –2025-26

Ms Amy Halliday was the former Departmental nominee and Deputy to the Deputy Chair. Her term on the Board ended in July 2025 due to legislative amendments.

The year in review – Board activities 2025-26

District boundary amendment proposals considered by the Board

Under schedule 2.1 of the Act, local governments may make proposals to create, change the boundaries of, or abolish districts.

The Board received a district boundary amendment proposal in February 2026, jointly submitted by Shires of Northam and York on behalf of an affected resident. The proposal sought to address the split of a ratepayers' property across two local government districts.

After consideration of the proposal, the Board recommended to the Minister for Local Government the boundary change proceed and that it be treated as one of a minor nature, not requiring an inquiry. The Minister for Local Government accepted the Board's recommendation. The proposal is now progressing through the administrative steps to implement the change.

Carried over from 2023-24 and carried over to 2025-26

In September 2023, the Board received a proposal from the City of Joondalup (City) to amend the City's district boundary at Ocean Reef Marina (ORM) to include the portion to be developed outside the City's current district boundary.

The City's previous district boundary at the existing ORM followed the water line around the shore and groynes. As a result of the redevelopment of the ORM, portions of the proposed ORM would have fallen outside the City's existing district boundary.

While the Board had approved the proposal previously, the implementation of the change faced delays due to deposited plans being unavailable because of ongoing work at the ORM site. After signing of the Governor's Order to implement the change, the change was finalised and published in the Government Gazette on 2 September 2025.

Ward and representation amendment proposals considered by the Board

The Board did not receive any ward and representation proposals this year.

Governance of the Board

The Board generally meets annually or biennially to review its governance principles and documentation and to ensure compliance and consistency with Public Sector Commission (PSC) guidelines.

During 2025-26, the Board continued to maintain its strong governance framework. At the 18 August 2025 meeting, the Board continued to finalise several governance documents that had been initially reviewed in May 2025. The review of governance documentation was finalised at the 19 November 2025 Board meeting. The updates

ensure that the Board's internally governing documents are robust and transparent in the provision of guidelines. The Board has consolidated all governance documents into a single, comprehensive Governance framework.

In addition, the Board has continued to maintain its guidelines and submission templates for boundary change proposals, and ward and representation reviews. These guidelines and templates are available on the Local Government Advisory Board webpage. [2]

[2] https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/local-government/boards-and-commissions#advisory-01

Other information

Information required to be reported under section 175ZE of the Electoral Act 1907 (public agencies to report on certain expenditure) is included in the Annual Report of the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS).

The following LGIRS officers provided executive, research and administrative support to the Board in 2025-26:

Officers:

Mr Shannon Wood:	Manager, Board Governance and Reporting
Mrs Taryn Cox:	Senior Strategy and Research Officer
Mr Jacob Thomas:	Strategy and Research Officer
Mr Nicholas Harmer:	Strategy and Research Officer

More information

If you would like more information, please contact the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety.

The Local Government Advisory Board Annual Report 2025-26 is available in a variety of formats from the LGIRS website.

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Government of Western Australia

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Gordon Stephenson House
Level 2/140 William Street
Whadjuk Noongar Country
Perth WA 6000

Locked Bag 14 Cloisters Square
Perth WA 6850

Telephone: 1300 136 237
National Relay Service: 13 36 77

advisoryboard@lgirs.wa.gov.au
www.lgirs.wa.gov.au

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