

## Climate Health WA Inquiry

### About your submission

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or group?

No

Yes

If yes, please identify the organisation: Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

### Your contact details

The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.

First name

██████

Surname

████████

Address

██

Phone

██████████

Email

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### Publication of submissions

Submissions will be published with the name of the submitter unless otherwise indicated below. Do you consent to be identified in the published submission?

Yes, I / my organisation agree to be identified

No, I / my organisation request to remain anonymous

### Terms of Reference

You are encouraged to address at least ONE of the Terms of Reference as listed below. Please select which item/s you will address:

1. Establish current knowledge on the implications of climate change for health in Western Australia (WA) and recommend a framework for evaluating future implications.

2. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will protect the public from the harmful health impacts of climate change.

3. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will strengthen the preparedness and

resilience of communities and health services against extreme weather events, with a focus on the most vulnerable in the community.

- 4. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will reduce the contribution of WA health services to climate change and other detrimental impacts.
- 5. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will enable WA Health services to implement change, including energy efficiency, to a more sustainable model.
- 6. Evaluate the likely benefits (health and wellbeing, social and economic) arising from climate change mitigation strategies, with a focus on WA health services.
- 7. Define the role of the Department of Health in leading public policy on climate change and health.
- 8. Recommend the Terms of Reference, scope and preferred methods for undertaking a climate change vulnerability assessment for the health sector.
- 9. Recommend the Terms of Reference, scope and preferred methods for developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the health sector.

### Submissions response field

**Please type your response to the item(s) selected above into the field below. Alternatively you may provide your submission as a separate attachment (suggested maximum 5 pages).**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (the department) represents industries in sport and recreation, culture and the arts, multicultural interests, Aboriginal heritage, racing, gaming, liquor and local government.

Climate change impact on some departmental areas can be found at:

[www.dsr.wa.gov.au/about/plan-for-the-future/climate-change](http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/about/plan-for-the-future/climate-change)

#### **2. 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

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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))*

The Climate Council's [Cities Power Partnership](#) is Australia's **fastest-growing** national climate program for **local government**, representing over 70 councils and 8 million Australians. Click on the link to find case studies for West Australian Councils.

### I. 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;
- Others as appropriate to the subject matter on the agenda.

and a Working Group;

- WALGA CEO;

<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.

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

These groups are managed by the department. More information can be found at: [dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/strengthening-local-government/state-local-government-agreement](http://dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/strengthening-local-government/state-local-government-agreement)

A climate agreement will sit under the partnership agreement. This is currently being negotiated and will be released at the same time as the State Climate Policy. The Western Australian Local Government Association's (WALGA) policy statement on climate change is being used as a starting point.

An Agreement on waste is also being negotiated.

#### II. 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:

1. Desktop assessment of each local government
2. Assessment results for each local government
3. Aggregated WA local government sector assessment results made available to each Local Government
4. Guidance materials produced for local governments, based on desktop assessment findings and identified needs.
5. 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:

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1. Better understanding of the impacts of climate change on local governments
2. Local governments more informed about climate change
3. Improved adaptation and resilience planning (as endorsed by local government in the WALGA Climate Change Policy Statement).
4. Improved understanding, and evidence base for, the degree to which climate change adaptation and emergency management is incorporated into local government governance.
5. 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.*

### III. 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

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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.

#### *Waste plans*

DWER is developing waste plans to improve local government waste planning and align local government waste management activities with the objectives and targets of the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030*.

Under 40 of the *Waste Avoidance and Resources Recovery Act 2007* (WARR Act), a local government may include within its plan for the future a waste plan outlining how, in order to protect human health and the environment, waste services provided by the local government will be managed to achieve consistency with the waste strategy.

The Director General of DWER, as the CEO who administers the WARR Act, may require a local government to include a waste plan within its plan for the future. Section 43(2) of the WARR Act sets out that a local government must perform its functions in respect of waste management in accordance with its waste plan.

The Director General has advised local governments of his intention to require waste plans following a further phase of consultation with local governments. Feedback has been received from a number of local governments during this engagement process questioning whether the provisions in the WARR Act and the *Local Government Act 1995* will require local governments to implement services consistent with the waste strategy. This highlights the need for confidence that the two Acts align to support the implementation of waste plans and is something that is being considered as part of the local government act review.

The MyCouncil website, which is managed by the department, has recently incorporated waste data provided by local governments to promote transparency on the quality and effectiveness of waste services provided by local governments, and to benchmark services between local governments.

DWER collects, but does not report, data on the costs of waste services, primarily because the quality and comparability of the data is poor and not fit for purpose. This limits the ability of the DWER and the Waste Authority to financially benchmark the waste services provided by local governments. Benchmarking is a key principle enshrined in the WARR Act and the waste strategy. Greater

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transparency and comparability of the costs of waste services would assist in this regard and would directly influence the likelihood of improved service provision by local governments in response to community demands.

### *Public health plans*

As the tier of government closest to the community, local governments play a critical role in service delivery at a local level. Local governments shape the delivery of services and support to the needs of their specific communities, informed by ongoing and direct engagement with, and an intimate knowledge of, those within their remit.

Of particular focus for local government is the health and wellbeing of the community. Under the *Public Health Act 2016*, local governments continue to play a significant role in enabling public health outcomes to be achieved, including the development and implementation of public health planning and the delivery of policies and programs to achieve the objectives of the Act.

Of significant contribution to community health and wellbeing is the provision of social infrastructure and supporting programs. Local governments' provision of libraries, leisure centres, parks, walk trails, playing fields and youth facilities combined with an overlay of events, programs and services create environments which support healthy, connected communities

### **3. 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. The department is considering updating this document and expanding it to incorporate other areas of business. It can be found at: [www.dsr.wa.gov.au/about/plan-for-the-future/climate-change](http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/about/plan-for-the-future/climate-change)

### **4. State Climate Policy**

The department is currently working across government on the State Climate Policy.

### **5. Waterwise action plan**

The department is currently working across government on the Waterwise action plan.

### **6. Conclusion - What can the department do?**

- effectively showcase awareness and behaviour change strategies;

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- 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;
- support a public health campaign, as it has previously through smoking and alcohol reduction strategies.
- 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.

**Please complete this sheet and submit with any attachments to: Climate Health WA Inquiry**