



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



Local Government Advisory Board

2024-25 Annual Report



Local Government Advisory Board Annual Report 2024-25

Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation & Safety

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Local Government

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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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Chair's Report

On behalf of the Local Government Advisory Board (the Board), I am pleased to present this year's annual report and to acknowledge the ongoing commitment of local governments across Western Australia to fostering strong, resilient, and well-governed communities.

In 2024-25, the Board met on a limited number of occasions, largely reflecting the impact of reforms to local government ward and representation structures implemented for the 2023 local government elections. As a result of these changes, the Board received fewer proposals during the 2024-25 period, given that the new structures are still bedding in and, in most cases, have not yet required adjustment.

While the reduced volume of proposals led to a lower overall workload compared to previous election years, the Board took the opportunity to focus on strengthening its own operations. In May 2025, members participated in a governance workshop aimed at reviewing and improving our internal processes and documentation. The workshop proved to be highly valuable, with all members recognising the importance of regular reviews to ensure our continued effectiveness and readiness for future demand. The implementation of these governance improvements is now underway.

During the reporting period, the Board also experienced several changes in its membership. On behalf of the Board, I wish to sincerely thank Ms Bana Brajanovic, who stepped down from her role as Deputy Chair, as well as Ms Joanne Soderlund and Councillor Karen Wheatland, whose terms concluded. Their contributions and commitment to the work of the Board have been greatly appreciated. We particularly thank Joanne and Karen for their ongoing service to the local government sector.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome Mayor Alison Xamon and Ms Joanne Abbiss to their new Deputy roles. Both bring a wealth of knowledge and experience, and I am confident their contributions will greatly benefit the Board's work. Inductions were held earlier this year, and together with the reappointment of existing members, the Board is well-positioned to carry out its responsibilities with depth and confidence. As the newly appointed Chair, I look forward to working with all members and building strong relationships in the year ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries for its ongoing support and my appreciation to the Departmental Officer and Board Deputy to the Deputy Chair, Ms Amy Halliday. Her commitment to ensuring continuity and the timely handling of Board matters - especially during the period when the Chair appointment was under Ministerial consideration - was instrumental to the Board's continued effectiveness.

Finally, I express my sincere thanks to the executive support staff, whose professionalism and diligence ensure that Board members receive timely, high-quality information and communications. Their efforts continue to enable us to operate to the highest standard.

Ms. Carol Adams OAM



Chair, Local Government Advisory Board
30 June 2025

Role and function of the Board

The Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) is a statutory body established under section 2.44 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the 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 (the 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 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 the (then) Minister'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 8 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

There are five members on the Board appointed by the Governor. The Chair is nominated by the Minister. The Minister also nominates two members from a list submitted by the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and one member from a list submitted by Local Government Professionals Australia WA (LG Pro). The Board also includes one member who is an officer of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), nominated by the Minister.

Four deputy members are also appointed by the Governor to officiate in the absence of members.

All appointments must be approved by Cabinet on the recommendation of the Minister and then by the Governor in Executive Council.

The current membership of the Board is as follows:

Name	Position	Nominated by	Current term ends
Ms Carol Adams OAM	Chairperson	Minister for Local Government	31 August 2027
VACANT	Deputy Chairperson	Minister for Local Government, Officer of DLGSC	
Mr Anthony Vuleta	Member	LG Pro	31 August 2026
Cr Russ Fishwick JP	Member	WALGA	31 August 2026
Mayor Caroline Knight	Member	WALGA	31 August 2027
Ms Amy Halliday	Deputy to the Deputy Chairperson	Minister for Local Government, Officer of DLGSC	31 August 2026
Ms Joanne Abbiss	Deputy to Anthony Vuleta	LG Pro	31 August 2026
Mayor Alison Xamon	Deputy to Russ Fishwick	WALGA	31 August 2026
Cr Jannah Stratford	Deputy to Caroline Knight	WALGA	31 August 2027

*Bana Brajanovic was the former Deputy Chair of the Board and resigned from her role on 12 May 2025.

Member profiles (as of 30 June 2025)

Ms Carol Adams OAM - Chair of the Board

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. She 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. Currently, Carol is the Chair of the WA Turf Club (trading as Perth Racing), a member of the South Metropolitan TAFE Governing Council, and the Chair of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Kwinana Branch. Her extensive experience includes serving on numerous boards and committees, such as the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, WA Local Government State Council, Local Government Superannuation Board, Local Government Grants Commission, and the WAPC Statutory Planning Committee. In recognition of her significant contributions, Carol was awarded the Freedom of the City of Kwinana in November 2023 and the Local Government Medal in August 2024 for her outstanding service to the local government sector.

Ms Amy Halliday – Acting Deputy Chair to the Board

Amy Halliday joined the Board in 2023, with her term continuing until 31 August 2026. She currently serves as the A/Director Local Government Support and Engagement at the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC). Amy has held various roles within DLGSC and has experience as an Economic Development Officer at the City of Subiaco. She holds a Bachelor of Social Science and Commerce.

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 and is a WALGA Life Member. Appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 2010, 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.

Mayor Caroline Knight – Member

Caroline Knight has been a member of the Board since October 2021, with her current term extending until August 2027. She is currently the Mayor of the City of Mandurah, a position she has held since January this year, following her tenure as Deputy Mayor since 2017. Caroline has been a councillor at the City of Mandurah for six years before being elected to her current role. 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 Caroline Knight

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).

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.

Mayor Alison Xamon – Deputy member to Russ Fishwick

Mayor Alison Xamon was appointed as a Deputy member to Cr Russ Fishwick from 10 Dec 2024 to 31 Aug 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. 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.

Former Member profiles

Ms Bana Brajanovic – Deputy Chair

Bana Brajanovic was appointed as a member and Deputy Chair of the Board in 2023, with her term set to expire 31 August 2026. She submitted her resignation on May 12, 2025, following a leave of absence. Bana had been with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) as the Director of Policy and Legislation since February 2023. Previously, she served as the Manager of Governance and Strategy at the Town of Victoria Park and held governance roles at the City of Subiaco and the City of Stirling. Bana holds a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Human Resources Management.

Ms Joanne Soderlund – Former deputy member to Anthony Vuleta

Joanne Soderlund was appointed as a deputy member of the board in September 2022, with her term expiring on 31 August 2024. She was previously the Chief Executive Officer at the Shire of Tammin. Prior to her CEO position at Tammin, Joanne was the Deputy Chief Executive Officer at the Shire of Cocos Keeling Islands.

Cr Karen Wheatland – Former deputy member to Russ Fishwick

Karen Wheatland was appointed as a deputy member of the Board in September 2019, and with her term expiring 31 August 2024. She has been a councillor with the City of Melville since 2017 and is the current Deputy Mayor. She is also a member of several committees and is currently National Vice President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association.

Expiry of terms of office –2025-26

No members or deputy members are expiring in the 2025-26 financial year.

The year in review – Board activities 2024-25

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.

No new district boundary change requests were received by the Board in 2024-25.

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

One boundary change proposal previously considered by the Board in 2023-24 was carried over to 2024-25. This will be carried over to 2025-26 and is expected to be finalised and published in the Government Gazette in 2025-26 (City of Joondalup at ORM).

Proposal to amend the boundaries of the City of Joondalup at Ocean Reef Marina

In September 2023, the Board received a proposal from the City of Joondalup (the 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 current district boundary at the existing ORM follows the water line around the shore and groynes. As a result of the redevelopment of the ORM, portions of the proposed ORM will fall outside the City's existing district boundary.

The revised boundary will include the modifications and changes brought about by activities or development.

While the Board's role in the matter is complete, the boundary change was not finalised as at 30 June 2025 due to the ongoing finalisation of deposited plans.

Ward and representation amendment proposals considered by the Board

Under schedule 2.2 of the Act, local governments with wards are required to conduct ward and representation reviews every 10 years.

The Board considered 55 proposals impacting local governments ward and representation structures in 2022-23 because of several reforms to the *Local Government Act 1995* impacting wards, councillor numbers and the requirement for the public election of the mayor or president for larger councils.

As a result, only one proposal was received by the Board in 2024-25. This was significantly less than the usual number of proposals received in a local government election year, and it is suggested this is due to the recent reforms, with the new structures yet to require adjustment.

The proposal received by the Board requested consideration of a proposed reduction in councillor numbers from seven to six as one of a minor nature and not one for which public submissions need to be invited, as per clause 5 of Schedule 2.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

The Board considered the proposal and referred it back to the local government to invite public submissions on the proposal, noting that any potential change to the Shire's elected member representation is in the public interest. An updated proposal has not been received at this time.

Governance of the Board

During 2024-25, the Board continued to maintain its strong governance framework. 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.

On 19 May 2025, the Board held a Governance Workshop to review its governance documentation. It was resolved that the existing documents—including the governance framework, Board charter, meeting procedures, communication protocols, and code of conduct—would be retained with minor amendments. Changes were largely to ensure alignment with the more recent Commission’s Instructions 40: Ethical Foundations and to meet updates to the Public Sector Commission’s good governance processes and guidelines.

The Board is planning to consolidate these governance documents into a single, comprehensive resource. Updates will be implemented over the 2025-26 financial year.

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.¹

In 2024-25, the Board also discussed the importance of transparency and is considering options to publish its decisions on all ward and representation changes and boundary amendments on its website.

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, Sport and Cultural Industries.

The following DLGSC officers provided executive, research and administrative support to the Board in 2024-25:

Officers:

Mr Shannon Wood:	Manager, Board Governance and Reporting (from November 2024)
Mrs Taryn Cox:	Senior Strategy and Research Officer (from November 2024) Acting Manager, Board Governance and Reporting (July 2024 – November 2024)
Mr Nicholas Harmer:	Strategy and Research Officer
Mr Jacob Thomas:	Strategy and Research Officer

Former Officers:

Ms Julie Craig:	Strategy and Research Officer
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¹ <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/local-governments/boards-and-commissions>

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 2024-25 is available in a variety of formats from the LGIRS website.

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