



Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

AROC Governance Group Meeting

17 November 2025

Commencing at 12pm

MINUTES

To: AROC Members

Here within are the minutes of the AROC Governance Group (Presidents & CEOs) meeting held on the abovementioned date and commencement time, in Council Chambers at the Shire of Toodyay, 15 Fiennes St, Toodyay.

Aaron Bowman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
AROC Secretariat

Preface

These Minutes will remain "Unconfirmed" until the next AROC Meeting, where the Minutes will be tabled and confirmed subject to any amendments.

The "Confirmed" Minutes are then signed off by the Chairperson.

Attachments that formed part of the Agenda, in addition to those tabled at the Meeting are incorporated into a separate attachment to these Minutes

Distribution

These minutes were approved for distribution on 2025.

Aaron Bowman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Confirmation

These minutes of meeting were confirmed at a meeting held on 2026.

Signed:

Note: The Presiding Member at the meeting at which the minutes were confirmed is the person who signs above.

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ATTACHMENTS with separate index follows item 5

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING

The AROC in-person meeting commenced at 11.07 am.

1.1. Announcement of Visitors

Tony Mahar, Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (online)

Hon Rob Horstman MLC, Member for Western Australia, Shadow Minister for Emergency Services; Volunteering (online from 12.30pm).

Warwick Carter, Director, Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance (~1.30pm)

1.2. Record of Attendance and Apologies

Cr M McKeown	Shire President, Shire of Toodyay
Mr A Bowman	CEO, Shire of Toodyay
Cr P Bantock	Shire President, Shire of Victoria Plains (online)
Mr S Fletcher	CEO, Shire of Victoria Plains (online)
Cr J Chester	Shire President, Shire of Goomalling
Cr C Gibbs	Shire President, Shire of York
Ms A Behan	CEO, Shire of York
Cr C Antonio	Shire President, Shire of Northam
Ms D Terelinck	CEO, Shire of Northam
Ms Melinda Prinsloo	CEO, Shire of Chittering
Cr M Campbell	Shire President, Shire of Chittering (online)
Ms K Murray	Executive Officer, AROC

Apologies

Mr S Bryce	CEO, Shire of Goomalling
Josh Pomykala	Director Regional Development Australia, Wheatbelt

2. MINUTES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION/AROC RES. NO.01/11/2025

MOVED Cr Antonio

SECONDED Cr Chester

That the unconfirmed minutes of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils meeting held on 1 September 2025 be accepted as a true and correct record.

MOTION CARRIED

2.2 Review of Status Report

See attached status report for an update on actions and progress arising from previous meetings and decisions.

2.3 Inward / Outward Correspondence

Inward

- Letter from the Hon Josh Wilson MP to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, Mr Tony Maher.
- Letter to AROC from the Hon Josh Wilson MP follow up from meeting on 18 September.

2.3.1 Financial Report

RECOMMENDATION/AROC RES. NO.02/11/2025

MOVED Cr Antonio

SECONDED Cr Bantock

That the financial report to 31 October 2025 is received.

MOTION CARRIED

3. OTHER BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE

3.1 Submissions, presentations or representations from third parties;

3.1.1 Regional Development Australia - Wheatbelt

Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development. See attached report.

3.1.2 Wheatbelt Development Commission

No update.

3.1.3 Hon Rob Horstman MLC, Member for Western Australia, Shadow Minister for Emergency Services; Volunteering (online from 12.30pm).

Mr Horstman asked members to share their experience of emergency services matters.

A Behan - Matters raised included telecommunications connectivity and reliability; no resolution of long-standing issues despite engagement with Telstra (via Boyd Brown at the Avon Midland Zone meeting). Concerns that internet access via Starlink will not be covered by DFES grant scheme.

M Prinsloo - Chittering is advocating strongly for permission to use home package connections as two emergency management stations currently have no connectivity (not since 3G was decommissioned).

S Fletcher indicated NBN will use Starlink.

Members agreed that access to Starlink will solve connectivity issues for the volunteer bush fire brigades but not access issues for the general community.

D – Terelink gave an example of the CESM responding to an accident within one km from town where a lack of mobile phone coverage prevented responders from calling 000. Reported it is common to have no coverage within a 5km radius from town.

This also occurs on the Northam-Toodyay Rd, and along Toodyay Rd between Toodyay and Gidgegannup.

Cr Campbell reported consisted issues since 3G was turned off.

Cr Antonio asked when Blackspot funding will be available to access.

Mr Horstman will utilise the issues raised above as content to form a question without notice. He asked what leave arrangements are in place to accommodate CESM leave periods?

Members reported that there is often no replacement for the CESM during leave periods. DFES requests for CESM to be seconded to DFES roles also creates a challenge and cannot always be accommodated.

S Fletcher – Raised the issue of betterment funding not being available.

D Terelinck - Asked when consultation regarding the Emergency Services Act will occur.

Cr Antonio – Raised issues with Great Eastern Highway and the Bindoon Bypass.

M Prinsloo – Chittering meets fortnightly with Main Roads to progress the bypass.

Mr Horstman – Thanked members for raising their concerns and identified questions on notice, questions without notice and tabling of petitions as ways in which he can raise issues in parliament. Mr Horstman also referenced the DFES annual report and the budget estimates hearing as avenues for him to ask questions of DFES.

Action – EO to distribute DFES Annual Report to members to identify issues that may be raised by Mr Horstman during budget estimates hearing.

Action – EO to send calendar appointment to Mr Horstman to attend the next Governance Group meeting in March 2026.

3.1.4 Tony Mahar, Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (online)

Commissioner Tony Mahar and Deputy Commissioner, Carolyn Francis joined the meeting online and delivered a presentation (provided as an attachment to these minutes).

Following the presentation, members raised the following issues:

Cr Antonio – Commented that local governments are the service centre for renewable projects and not only the communities that are hosting them; non-disclosure agreements between renewable energy proponents and private landowners are causing grief for local governments, as is end of life decommissioning. An appropriate financial instrument is required to determine costs.

Cr Gibbs – Developers approaching private landowners without including the local government, which is faced with the real impacts on roads etc, is an issue; as is appropriate rating infrastructure.

3.2 Matters referred by the Officer’s Group for consideration or decision;

3.2.1 MOU amendments to include Shire of Chittering and a change of name

At the Governance Group meeting on 1 September 2025, AROC Res. No. 03/09/2025 ‘accepted the Shire of Chittering as a member of AROC; and referred the MOU to the Officer’s Group to make agreed changes.’

The EO outlined the changes to the MOU which was provided as an attachment to the agenda. Before moving to endorse the amended MOU and formally welcome the Shire of Chittering to AROC, members agreed to determine a change of name for AROC and incorporate this change into the MOU.

Following consideration of these names:

- Avon Midland Growth – Organisation/Alliance/Partnership/Network
- Avon Arc Outer Metro 2035 (AAOM2035)
- North East Outer Metropolitan Group (NEOMG)
- Outer Metro 2035 (OM2035)
- Outer Metro Regional Partnership (OMRP)
- Outer Growth Council Network (OGCN)
- Peri-Urban Partnership (PUP)
- Perth Outer Metro - Organisation, Alliance, Partnership, Network (POM-)
- Perth’s Outer Metro 2035 (POM2035)

Members selected Avon Midland Peri-Urban Partnership (AMP-UP) as the name to replace AROC.

RECOMMENDATION/AROC RES. NO.03/11/2025

MOVED Cr Antonio **SECONDED** Cr Gibbs

That the Governance Group:

1. Change AROC's name to the Avon Midland Peri-Urban Partnership (AMP-UP).
2. Endorse the amended AROC/AMP-UP MOU, request members to sign it and formally welcome the Shire of Chittering to the Avon Midland Peri-Urban Partnership.

MOTION CARRIED

3.2.2 Warwick Carter, Director, Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance

Warwick spoke about the Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance and its approach to advocating on priorities. Warwick presented slides with key data for AROC members (see attachments) including unemployment over time, workforce, aged population and advice on advocating to state and federal government.

Key messages:

- AROC to identify themes/big issues that members agree on.
- Align your issues/initiatives with government priorities/outcomes and clearly demonstrate how AROC initiatives will assist the government to achieve their priorities. For example, with Federal Government AUKUS, social housing and homelessness are priorities.
- Use your government assets e.g. Sabine Winton, Minister for the Wheatbelt (WA); Trish Cook, Member for Bullwinkle (Federal) and the Hon Melissa Price, Member for Durack (Federal), to secure meetings and open up discussions with key advisors and Ministers.
- Key data shows unemployment is very low but aged population is higher than elsewhere which leads to vulnerabilities in health servicing and housing (for aged people but also for key workers in health and aged care).
- Suggestions for advocating in Canberra – use your local members to get access; get parliamentary visitor passes to improve access (need 6 weeks notice); meetings will be 15-20mins, keep number of representatives low, maximum of 3 people; make sure you have a 1 pager and follow-up with a detailed submission; use budget estimates submission process and don't visit during local government week; best days Tuesday and Wednesdays.
- Suggestions for state government - ~ \$2m was promised prior to the last election; get prepared early with submissions; work with government; use Minister Winton (Wheatbelt); Treasury and Treasurer are key. Priority focus is modular housing.

3.3 Matters raised by individual member local governments for consideration;

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 National Road, Transport and Infrastructure Congress 2025

S Fletcher provided an overview of the congress (see attached presentation slides).

5. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2026

2026	Officer's Group (CEO) Meetings	Governance Group (President's) Meetings
	11.00am	11.00am
	Online Meetings	Council Chambers
JAN	No meeting	No meeting
FEB	9/02/2026	
MAR		9/03/2026
APR	20/04/2026	
MAY		11/05/2026
JUNE	8/06/2026	
JULY		20/07/2026
AUG	10/08/2026	
SEPT		14/09/2026
OCT	12/10/2026	
NOV		16/11/2026
DEC	No meeting	No meeting

6. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 2.10 pm.



AROC Governance Group Meeting

Attachments to Minutes – 17 November 2025

Minutes and additional information

2.2 Status report

2.3 Inward / outward correspondence

- Letter from the Hon Josh Wilson MP to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, Mr Tony Maher.
- Letter to AROC from the Hon Josh Wilson MP follow up from meeting on 18 September.

2.3.1 Financial report to 31 October 2025

Other business / new business of an urgent nature

3.1 Submissions, presentations or representations from third parties;

3.1.1 Regional Development Australia - Wheatbelt

Report provided by Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development.

3.2.2 Tony Maher, Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner – presentation slides

3.2.3 Warwick Carter, Director, Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance – presentation slides

4.1 National Road, Transport and Infrastructure Congress 2025 – presentation slides

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
2.1 Confirmation of Minutes	17/11/2025	That the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils Governance Group meeting held on 1 September 2025 be accepted as a true and correct record.	11/2025	EO		17.11.25: Minutes to be confirmed and signed at the next Governance Group meeting on 17 November 2025
Corella Management	13/03/2023	AROC RES. NO.02/03/23: That AROC members individually commit \$5,000 per annum in 2023, 2024 and 2025, and commit \$25,000 pa from AROC funds for three years, towards corella management activities.	2026	ALL	2026	17.11.25: Steering Group meeting was held on 3.11.25 to review the project plan and arrangements for a coordinated cull, which is now likely to proceed with the use of commercial shooters as a result of the impact of firearms legislation on arrangements; DPIRD have endorsed a trial use of alphachloralose (details tba).
Housing shortage	16/05/2022	AROC to advocate to relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers (Housing & Local Government) to address a critical shortage of housing in the Avon Region.	2026	EO	Ongoing	17.11.25: Sean advised that he has signed off on the WA Treasury FAA for HSP CEI. WA Treasury will receive the funds on 7 November 2025. Vic Plains will then be paid 70% of the HSP CEI funding within 7 days of this happening.
Canberra Advocacy	22/7/2024	Res.04/07/24: That AROC members seek the support of their Council's for the Shire President and CEO to form an AROC delegation to lobby Ministers and Shadow Ministers regarding collective and individual priorities	30/9/24	ALL		17.11.25: Officer's Group recommends deferring plans to advocate in Canberra until AROC has confirmed membership, considered a name change and had the benefit of hearing from Warwick Carter, Director Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance, regarding PSWMA's advocacy

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
		prior to the Federal Election.				approach (November meeting).
Regional Collaboration on Waste	13/11/2023	That AROC submit a motion to the WALGA Avon Zone meeting to advocate for a metropolitan waste levy to fund investment in alternative waste management locations and technologies in regional areas.	2025-2026	EO	Motion completed. Waste strategy continues.	17.11.25: RfQ ready for release; and assessment panel to be appointed.
Branding & Promotions	2/9/2024	RES. NO.03/09/24: That the Officer's Group prepare a branding brief for AROC to be considered by the Governance Group.	18/11/2024	Officers		17.11.25: To be initiated once a change of name and branding brief are agreed. The Officer's Group panel selected Market Creations to develop branding and promotions.
Climate Change Initiative	12/07/2021	AROC CEOs to work together to identify a project we could apply for funding on a regional level.	Ongoing	ALL		17.11.25: WALGA states that the 2025-26 State Budget "lacks climate action commitment" and has seen a "noticeable shift away from broader climate action". Notes a lack of sufficient investment in climate adaptation and mitigation.
Road clearing permits and pre-funding for road projects.	08/05/2023	That AROC submit a motion to the WALGA Avon Zone meeting to advocate for specific changes to the native vegetation clearing permit system.	23/06/2023	EO		6.8.24: No further update to that provided 22.7.24: Rebecca Palumbo, Shire of York, met with DWER staff about the Native Vegetation Policy Implementation Roadmap and specifically the Action 4.1 Roadside Vegetation Advice.

Purpose	Meeting Date	Resolution	Target date for completion	Actioned by	Completion Date	Meeting Commentary
Water sustainability	10/05/2021	Avon River health & access to funding.	Ongoing	Northam, York & Toodyay		15.4.24: On hold. No recent action.



THE HON JOSH WILSON MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MB25-000679

Mr Tony Mahar
Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner
PO Box 24434
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Aeic@aeic.gov.au

Dear Commissioner

I write to inform you of my attendance at a workshop with the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC) in the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia on 18 September 2025, and to request you consider scheduling a meeting with them as part of your work program.

At the forum, councils informed me of the significant scale of the roll-out of renewable energy infrastructure planned for the region, and the challenges this is presenting for rural councils with limited capacity to engage with energy proponents and constituents with complex concerns.

The AROC councils were particularly interested in the work of the Commission and during the forum we discussed your role in considering complaints from concerned residents about renewable energy and major transmission projects, and your broader work to identify and promote best practice relating to the planning, development and operation of renewable energy projects and new transmission.

I would be grateful if you would consider visiting the Wheatbelt to engage in a similar forum with local government at the appropriate time. Ms Kelly-Anne Murray, AROC Executive Officer, is a key contact who will be able to assist your office to arrange a meeting. She can be contacted at aroc@toodyay.wa.gov.au.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



JOSH WILSON



THE HON JOSH WILSON MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MB25-000677

Kelly-Anne Murray
Executive Officer
Avon Regional Organisation of Councils

aroc@toodyay.wa.gov.au

Dear AROC Councils

I am writing to thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet with the Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC) on 18 September 2025. I would like to commend you on this forum. I found it very valuable, and it provided me with insights on a range of issues of importance to your region.

Renewable energy generation was of course an important element of discussion, and I acknowledge that the Wheatbelt is contributing to the heavy lifting to support new renewable energy generation and capacity in the South West Interconnected System. The significance of these developments underscores the need for energy infrastructure proponents to meaningfully engage and consult with the Local Government Areas (LGAs) in your region.

The Albanese Government is strongly encouraging energy infrastructure proponents to meaningfully engage and consult with local governments. In particular, the Government is implementing the Community Engagement Review in collaboration with the states and territories. This includes introducing a renewable energy developer ratings scheme (DRS) that was launched in August as a pilot. To receive a positive assessment under the DRS, energy proponents will need to demonstrate their credentials for good community engagement. I also wanted to acknowledge the feedback that some regional councils have limited capacity to engage with project proponents. I will raise this issue with the Western Australia Government.

We also discussed the role of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner in considering complaints from concerned residents about renewable energy and major transmission projects, and the work of the Commissioner's office in working across governments and with other stakeholders to support implementation of the recommendations from the Community Engagement Review and development of the DRS. I am in the process of writing to the Commissioner, Mr Tony Mahar, to ask that he come to the Wheatbelt to further engage with AROC and other wheatbelt councils.

As noted in our discussion, I encourage all councils to read the National Climate Risk Assessment and consider the information pertaining to their LGA. We will be considering local government feedback via the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) in developing the action agenda for National Adaptation Plan and I encourage local governments to provide their feedback through WALGA.

Regarding betterment projects under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), states are able to request the Prime Minister's agreement for exceptional assistance to cost-share betterment works to essential public assets following a significant disaster. These programs provide an opportunity to rebuild to a more resilient standard, with the goal to mitigate risks of future disaster events and their costs.

On 21 November 2023, the Prime Minister agreed to jointly fund \$104.9 million in betterment funding with the Western Australian government following Tropical Cyclone Ellie. This betterment program makes funding available to state agencies and affected local governments – in this case, Broome, Derby West Kimberley, Halls Creek and Wyndham East Kimberley – to undertake works for the reconstruction of assets impacted by the event, ensuring they are built to a stronger, more resilient standard. This is the first betterment fund implemented in Western Australia.

I encourage you to continue engaging with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services as the administering agency for DRFA in Western Australia on matters relating to infrastructure betterment.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to participate in the AROC forum on 18 September.

Yours sincerely



JOSH WILSON

cc: The Hon Trish Cook MP
Member for Bullwinkel

AVON REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Administered by Shire of Northam

	01.07.2025 31.10.2025 \$	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022
Brought Forward	144,349	174,489	141,001.39	178,061	161,314
Revenue					
Member Contributions	15,000	25,000	25,000.00	25,000	25,000
Grants					
WDC Contribution					
Fees & Charges					
Interest Earnings	1,354	5,265	6,135.67	2,882	247
Workforce Housing					
AROC Corella Project					
GST refund	1,562	4,894	7,177.23		
Total Revenue	17,917	40,159	105,812.90	27,881.85	25,247
Expenses					
Insurance					
Recreation Plan					
Equipment Expenditure	-				
Shire of Toodyay Administration	-				
Corella Population Management		2,750			
WB Infrastructure Conway Highbury					
WB Infrastructure refund to WDC					
AROC - DANDARAGAN Workforce Housing					
WHEATBELT Corella Project	16,500	23,650	28,600.00		
Localise Aged Friendly Audit		30,250	27,500.00		
Strategic Waste Management Plan					
Travel	149	106	49.40	100.10	
Mobile Phone	750	576	791.40	580.00	
Training					
Capacity and capability assessment					
Executive Office Wages	6,609	11,550	12,975.00	16,796.18	
Executive Office Super	1,077	2,046	2,000.89	2,505.78	
Administration expenses other		399	408.70		
Other Expenditure Exit Dowerin					
Total Expenditure	25,086	71,327	72,325.39	64,941.46	8,500
Net Result	(7,169)	(30,138)	33,487.51	(37,060)	16,747
Accumulated Funds on hand					
31.10.2025	137,179	144,349	174,488.90	141,001.39	178,061
Represented by Commonwealth Muni Account	137,179				



An Australian Government Initiative



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHEATBELT

RDA Wheatbelt Inc | 3 Constable St, Gingin WA 6503

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Website: www.rdaheatbelt.com.au

ABN: 30 580 026 380

November 2025

RDA Wheatbelt Update – AROC Meeting

Josh Pomykala, Director Regional Development
E: josh.pomykala@rdawheatbelt.com.au | P: 0428 372 179

Director Regional Development

RDA Wheatbelt continues to deliver a range of projects supporting sustainable growth and development across the Wheatbelt region.

In early October, Josh and Mischa Stratford (Committee Member) travelled to Canberra for the Regional Australia Institute's "Regions Rising National Summit". The summit included the official release of the "Regionalisation Ambition 2032 – Year 3 Progress Report", as well as opportunities for in-depth discussions with regional leaders from across the nation. Whilst in Canberra, Josh and Mischa were able to meet with a number of key people who have important roles across our programs. These include Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie (Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, Leader of The Nationals in the Senate), the Hon Melissa Price MP (Shadow Minister for Defence Industry, Shadow Minister for Defence Personnel, Member for Durack), Rebecca Duncan (Senior Adviser to the Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Emergency Management, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and the Territories), and Brett Nordstrom (Assistant Secretary, Higher Education Program Delivery Branch).

Additionally, Josh attended the RDA National Forum held in Canberra from 4-6 November. 53 RDAs from across the country were represented over 2 days, with a number of challenges faced by regions across the country addressed through presentations and discussion panels.

Regular engagement with Local Government CEOs and Elected Members remains a key priority. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss local challenges, emerging opportunities, and ongoing or proposed projects. While our small team strives to attend as many regional events as possible, we remain available for support through in-person meetings, phone, email, or video conference.

CEOs are encouraged to contact Director Regional Development for assistance with local initiatives, while Chris Evans (Research, Evaluation and Project Officer) can provide project support to Project, Community, or Economic Development Officers — email chris.evans@rdawheatbelt.com.au.

Welcome to RDA Wheatbelt Chair

Following the appointment of four new Committee Members in August 2025, RDA Wheatbelt is pleased to announce the appointment of Renata Paliskis as Chair. Appointed by the Australian Government Minister for Regional Development in October 2025, Renata brings extensive leadership experience, currently serving as CEO of Wheatbelt NRM and holding directorships across multiple organisations. I look forward to working with Renata on enhancing opportunities throughout the Wheatbelt. I also extend my thanks to our outgoing Committee Members, and welcome the organisation's new Committee Members, who all bring in-depth experience and knowledge from a broad range of areas.

Economic Development Training for Local Government

23 LGs have participated in RDA Wheatbelt's Economic Development Training for Local Government program, which has been very successful. This full-day workshop provides:

- Tailored data, reports, and resources specific to each participating Local Government;
- Guidance on analysing and applying this data through an economic development lens; and
- Strategic tools and case studies to explore new approaches and ideas.

The training is open to all staff and Elected Members involved in or interested in economic development. RDA Wheatbelt strongly encourages Elected Members to participate as key strategic decision-makers in their communities, particularly with a number of new Elected Members in the recent election.

The program will continue for participating Local Governments until November 2025. RDAW will seek interest from LGs to run the program again in 2026.

Feedback is welcomed and can be sent to admin@rdawheatbelt.com.au.

Training for Aboriginal Corporations and NFPs – Governance and Financial Management

RDA Wheatbelt is developing the next phase of a project to deliver culturally appropriate governance and financial management training for Aboriginal corporations and not-for-profit organisations. The business plan is currently being drafted to seek funding for the project, which will be brought in-house rather than seeking to contract a third party.

The program aims to:

- Align with Australian Government legislative requirements;
- Empower Boards and staff to strengthen governance capacity; and
- Include a 'train the trainer' component to build local leadership and sustainability.

An initial pilot will be delivered with selected organisations in the region, followed by a review to guide future regional rollout.

Research Evaluation – Aboriginal Student Achievement Through Secondary/Primary Schools Cluster Model Approach (Cluster Model)

RDA Wheatbelt has completed its undertaking of research work for the Ngala Koolangka Education Foundation Aboriginal Corporation, evaluating the effectiveness of the School Cluster Model (SCM) for improving Aboriginal student outcomes through language and cultural learning.

This work will underpin understandings of how the cluster model may be integrated into the Department of Education framework for the Wheatbelt, and serve as a basis for other initiatives that may be available to strengthen education delivery in the Wheatbelt.

Education in Regional Communities

RDA Wheatbelt continues its work in advocating strongly to the State and Australian Governments for greater support for regional and rural schools. Regional education is vital to the sustainability of regional communities and economic development, having large social and economic impacts throughout the region. Along with various stakeholders, RDA Wheatbelt is taking part in a coordinated approach to ensure the future of regional education is strong throughout the Wheatbelt. We continue to work with relevant policy makers and stakeholders to address the issues regional education faces for the Wheatbelt.

RDA Wheatbelt's recent submissions on the education reviews highlight the current education structure in the Wheatbelt, the challenges faced by regional schools (including students and teachers), and what opportunities/change mechanisms can enhance students' experiences.

Defence Supply Chain Project

The project's scope is set to expand to include renewables in the broader supply chain, given the transition within the Wheatbelt to include the renewables industry. Gemma Bovington and Chetan Bhatia continue to work within this project, including:

- Engaging Wheatbelt businesses and defence contractors;
- Identifying regional capabilities and aligning them with industry needs;
- Supporting businesses currently engaged in the defence supply chain; and
- Encouraging new businesses to explore defence-related opportunities.

The project seeks ongoing support from both State and Australian Governments and continues collaboration with the Office of Defence Industry Support (ODIS). By building these partnerships, the initiative aims to diversify and strengthen the Wheatbelt economy.

Housing

RDA Wheatbelt is pursuing opportunities to improve key worker accommodation across the region. Adequate housing is essential for workforce attraction and retention — particularly for major regional projects. RDAW understands that LGs require appropriate key worker accommodation to fill critical shortages in employment areas, as well as meet demand of large-scale projects set to begin in the region.

RDA Wheatbelt is:

- Engaging with Australian Government departments to identify funding pathways and future possibilities;
- Building relationships with key stakeholders; and
- Assisting Local Governments with funding proposals and advocacy support.

Local Governments are encouraged to contact RDAW for assistance in developing projects or funding proposals for housing solutions.

Local Government Funding Support

RDA Wheatbelt continues to offer assistance to LGs with funding opportunities for various projects throughout the region. Our organisation has assisted with connection-building between various industries, stakeholders and LGs, and the lobbying of Australian Government Ministers to access greater support for projects within our region. RDA Wheatbelt encourages Local Governments to contact us regarding:

- Initial proposals – discussion regarding the logistics and requirements of such undertakings to achieve maximum funding opportunities.
- Business cases – to analyse and provide feedback on completed business cases before submission.
- Funding applications – to analyse and provide feedback on funding applications before submission.

Our organisation provides this at no cost to stakeholders and ensures that funding submissions contain all necessary information and elements for assessors. If your LG is undertaking any particular project that seeks Government support or funding, please reach out to see how we can provide as much support as possible.

Regional Precincts and Partnership Program (rPPP)

The rPPP will run over 3 years, from 2023/24 to 2025/26. It is primarily focused on a partnership approach, bringing together government bodies and communities to plan and deliver regional precincts, tailored to local needs and create a shared vision in how the precinct connects to the region. Partners can be from government, First Nations groups, community organisations, regional universities, or private enterprise.

Regional precincts or 'places with a purpose' are user-defined geographic areas with a specific shared need or theme. Regional precincts may include business districts, neighbourhoods, activity centres, commercial hubs or community and recreational areas. They are located in renewal and growth areas in regional centres, regional corridors, regional cities, as well as smaller town centres that serve as service hubs in more remote communities.

There are two streams of the rPPP which are delivered as two separate grant opportunities:

- Stream One - Precinct development and planning: to activate partnerships and to deliver an investment-ready precinct plan.
- Stream Two - Precinct delivery: to deliver a specified project or projects as part of a precinct.

The objective of Stream One is to activate partnerships to jointly deliver precinct plans. The intended outcomes of Stream One are:

- establish partnerships comprised of relevant government entities, community organisations and businesses that have a shared vision for a regional precinct;
- deliver precinct plans that are tailored to their local contexts and based on community feedback and engagement;
- support precinct plans to become investment ready; and
- contribute to the Australian Government's current policy priorities, including but not limited to Closing the Gap, transition to a net zero economy, Australia's emission reduction goals, social and affordable housing, and National Cultural Policy.

The objective of Stream Two is to work with partners to support the delivery of precincts that will provide targeted benefits related to productivity, equity, and resilience for regional, rural and remote areas across Australia.

The intended outcomes of Stream Two are:

- deliver project(s) that form part of a precinct or foundational infrastructure that activates a precinct;
- develop and deliver regional precincts comprised of multiple infrastructure components, which provide benefits related to productivity, equity and resilience; and
- contribute to the Australian Government's current policy priorities, including but not limited to Closing the Gap, transition to a net zero economy, Australia's emission reduction goals, social and affordable housing, and National Cultural Policy.

Go to this link for guidelines, F&Qs and a recording of the webinar explaining the program.

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regional-australia/regional-and-community-programs/regional-precincts-and-partnerships-program>

RDA Wheatbelt has assisted numerous Local Governments with their intentions to apply for the funding and encourage any other Local Governments to approach us to provide any support.

The first six funded projects can be viewed at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regional-australia/regional-and-community-programs/regional-precincts-and-partnerships-program>

Grants

GrantGuru is an aggregation of all online grant portals – essentially a one-stop shop for funding pathways. Remember to register for free email alerts for when grants open or if they change according to your preferences and profile. Register here <https://rdawa.grantguru.com.au/register/>.

The free community portal can be embedded on an LG's website to boost support of local businesses and community groups, including access to grant information.

We negotiated a half price subscription for LGs, \$500 ex GST per year for two years to join the exclusive Local Government portal which collates grant information available only to Local Governments. Please contact Pippa at admin@rdawheatbelt.com.au to renew or sign up.

Study Hubs

RDA Wheatbelt will again welcome the Australian Government Minister for Education, The Hon Jason Clare MP, who will be travelling over exclusively for the opening of the Northam Study Hub mid-November. The Minister has been impressed with the program's outreach across the region, having officially opened the Ellenbrook Study Hub on 3 June, which captures students from the Wheatbelt's peri-urban Local Government areas and provides access to services where they would otherwise be required to travel into the city.

With the Northam Study Hub now operational, this brings the total number of hubs serving Wheatbelt students to six:

- Regional Hubs: Merredin, Narrogin, Northam, Wongan Hills, York
- Metropolitan Hub: Ellenbrook

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Australian Government
Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

AEIC Overview

Avon Regional Organisation
of Councils – WA

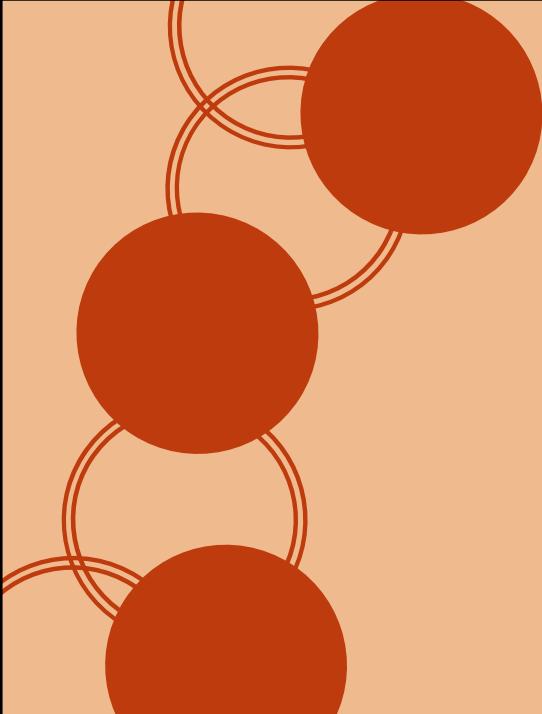
Tony Mahar – Commissioner
17 November 2025



Helping to make the energy shift *smoother and fairer*

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We acknowledge the Traditional
Owners of Country throughout Australia
and recognise their continuing
connection to land, waters and culture.
We pay our respects to their Elders
past and present.

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The Office of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

Independent non-statutory appointment
The Commissioner is supported by a team of 7 staff

The National Wind Farm Commissioner was appointed by the Australian Government in late 2015 in response to community concerns about wind farms.

The role was expanded in March 2021 to cover other energy infrastructure, and its name was changed to reflect this broader scope.

The Commissioner's role is set out in Terms of Reference.

The Commissioner reports to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy and provides an Annual Report to parliament.

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3

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What we do



Community Enquiries and Complaints



Transparency and Best Practice



Stakeholders and First Nations Engagement



Community Engagement Review

AROC | 17 November 2025

4

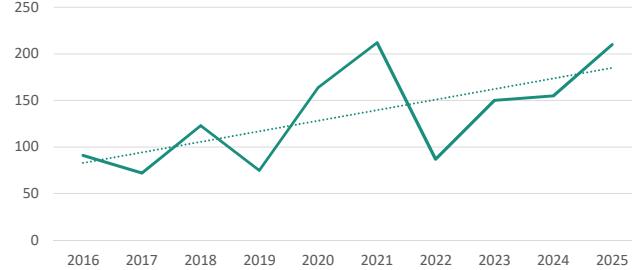
Community Enquiries & Complaints

- Large scale renewable energy facilities
- New transmission Infrastructure
- Landholders, neighbours, community groups, First Nations communities
- Cannot stop projects

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AEIC total case numbers by year



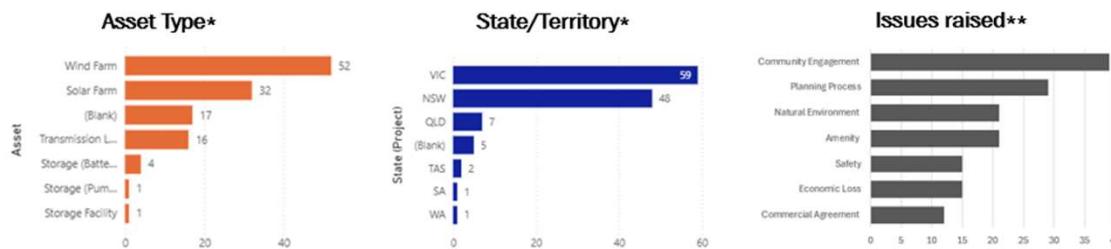
*Data notes
- 2025 projection from YTD
- 2021 was when transmission was first added to scope

- From 2015 to 2024 - the Office of the AEIC has managed over 1000 cases.
- This year alone we are projecting towards 200+ cases, over and above the concerns we are hearing when out and about talking with people.

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Complaint Case Themes 1 January – 30 June 2025



Continuation of trends over recent years

- Wind farms remain a key concern
- East coast states typically more cases, aligned with where more projects are proposed
- Community Engagement remains the primary issue raised
- Planning Process is increasing as an issue raised

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6

Stakeholders and First Nations

- We work with and share insights from across all levels of government, industry and community
- Including promoting the information and engagement needs of First Nations communities

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- Building on the great foundations set by Andrew Dyer, we continue to build strong connections with:
 - Community members and groups
 - Peak groups
 - Proponents
 - First Nations
 - Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and departments.
- Importantly, meeting community *where they live* where possible.
- Listening and learning, using this to prioritise our actions.

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Transparency and Best Practice

- Make information about the energy transition easier to find and understand
- Submissions and consultations
- Publish facts and positions
- Conferences and Events
- Use media to share message

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Submissions, including

- PoweringWA's *Draft guideline on community benefits for renewable energy projects: Consultation paper*
- Select Committee on Information Integrity on Climate Change and Energy
- Productivity Commission 5 Pillars Inquiry: Investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation

Publications

- [Position statement: Treatment of renewable energy assets at end of life – protection for landholders](#)
- Insurance for landholders and neighbours (coming soon)
- Contamination Risks (coming soon)

Presentations

- Speech and Panel – *Energy in WA*

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Community Engagement Review

- Completed by former Commissioner Andrew Dyer
- ECMC response and implementation agreed July 2024
- Further update on progress planned for December 2025

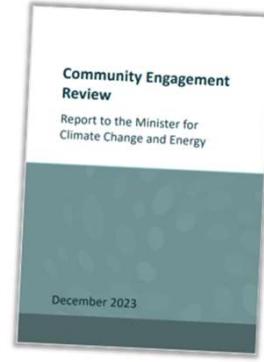
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The previous Commissioner delivered this report to the Commonwealth Minister in December 2023, outlining what is required to achieve ongoing excellence in community engagement in the execution of the energy transition.

The report identified 6 key themes:

1. Developer performance and selection
2. Selecting the best sites
3. Reform environmental and planning approvals
4. Complaint management
5. Messaging and governance
6. Coordinated economic development and community benefits



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Do you see what I see...?

- Lack of genuine engagement
- Community benefit not being realised
- Communities feeling they are going to be worse off
- Poor behaviour of stakeholders
- Unhelpful power struggles
- Influence on policy and politics
- Uncertainty and misinformation making the disruption worse
- Ignoring the strategic importance of regions

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What do we need to see...?

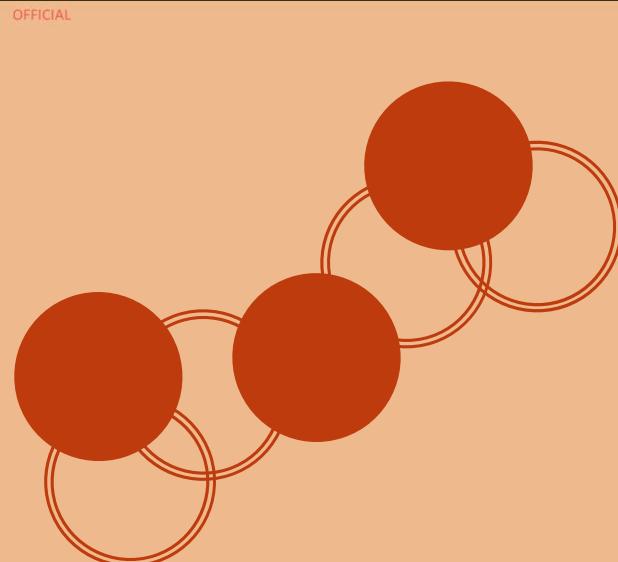
- A clearer, more compelling story, explanation and demonstration on the practical reasons for the energy transition
- A more comprehensive, transparent, country-wide planning framework
- Policy certainty and an evidenced based discussion
- Improve the community benefits regime – more equity – more tangible benefits for the community both short and long term.
- More accountability from the industry - Practical tools, such as the Developer Rating Scheme, and more stringent and mandatory measures

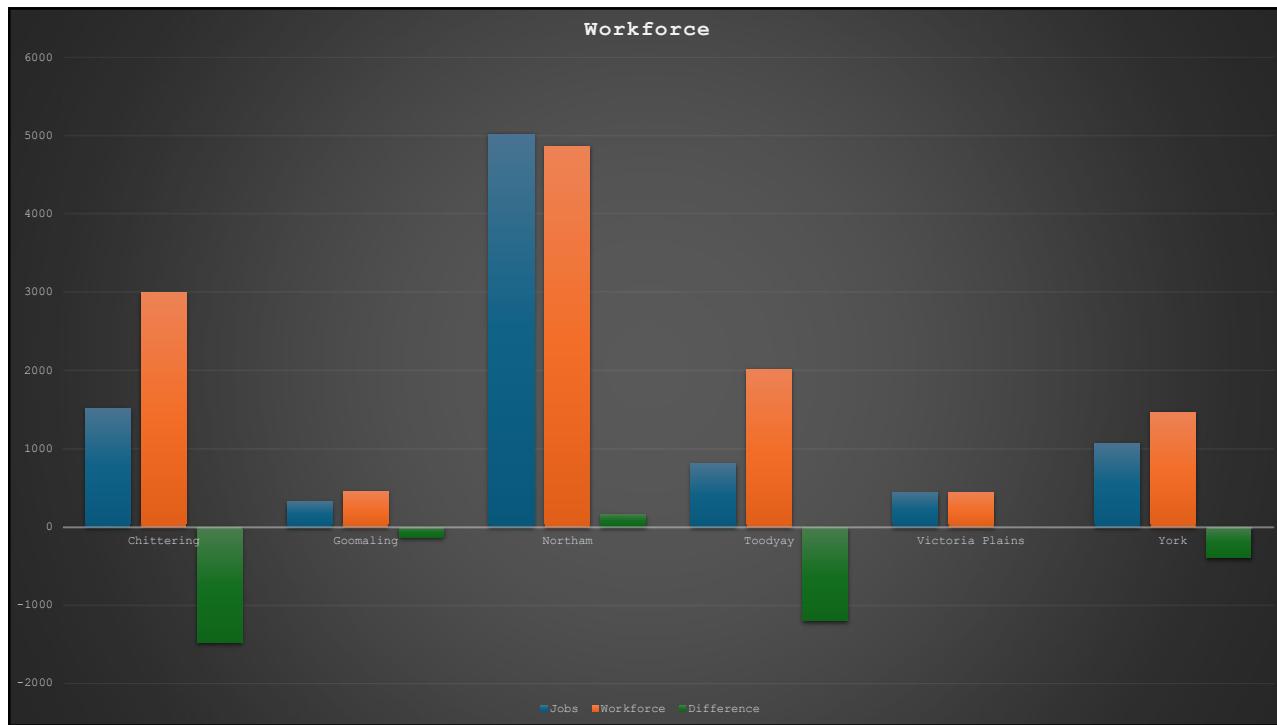
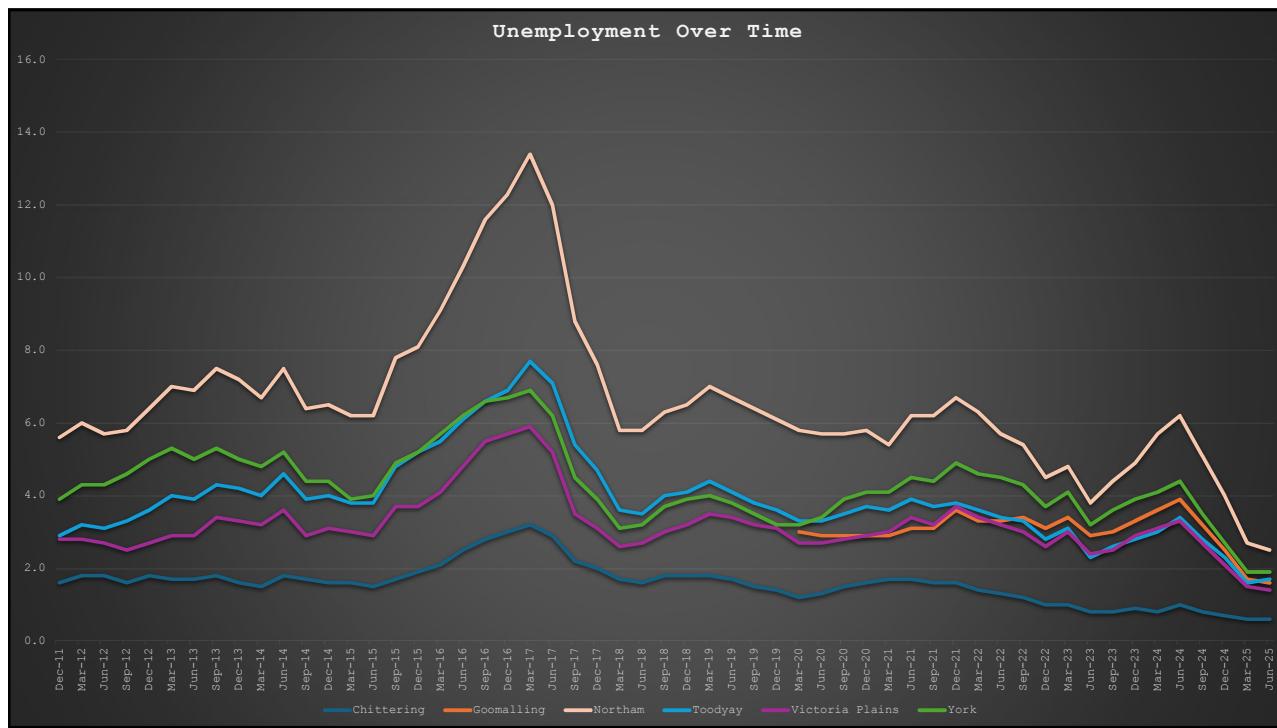
Contact us

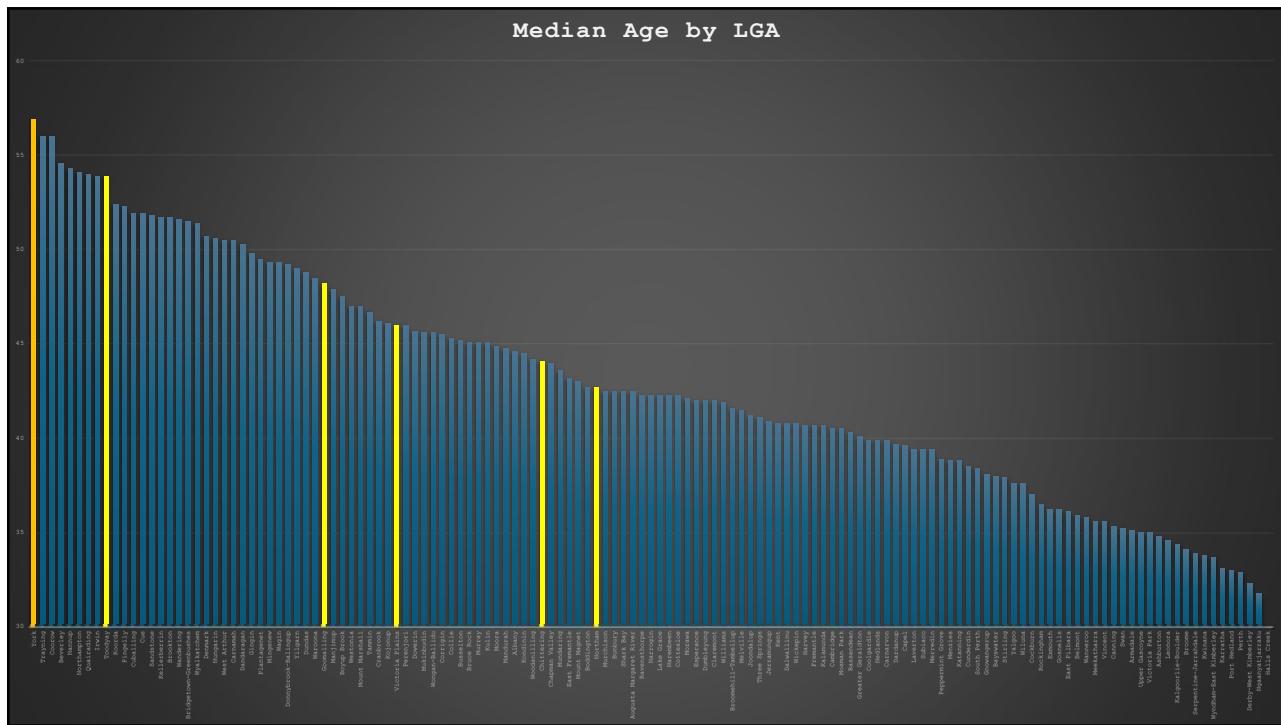
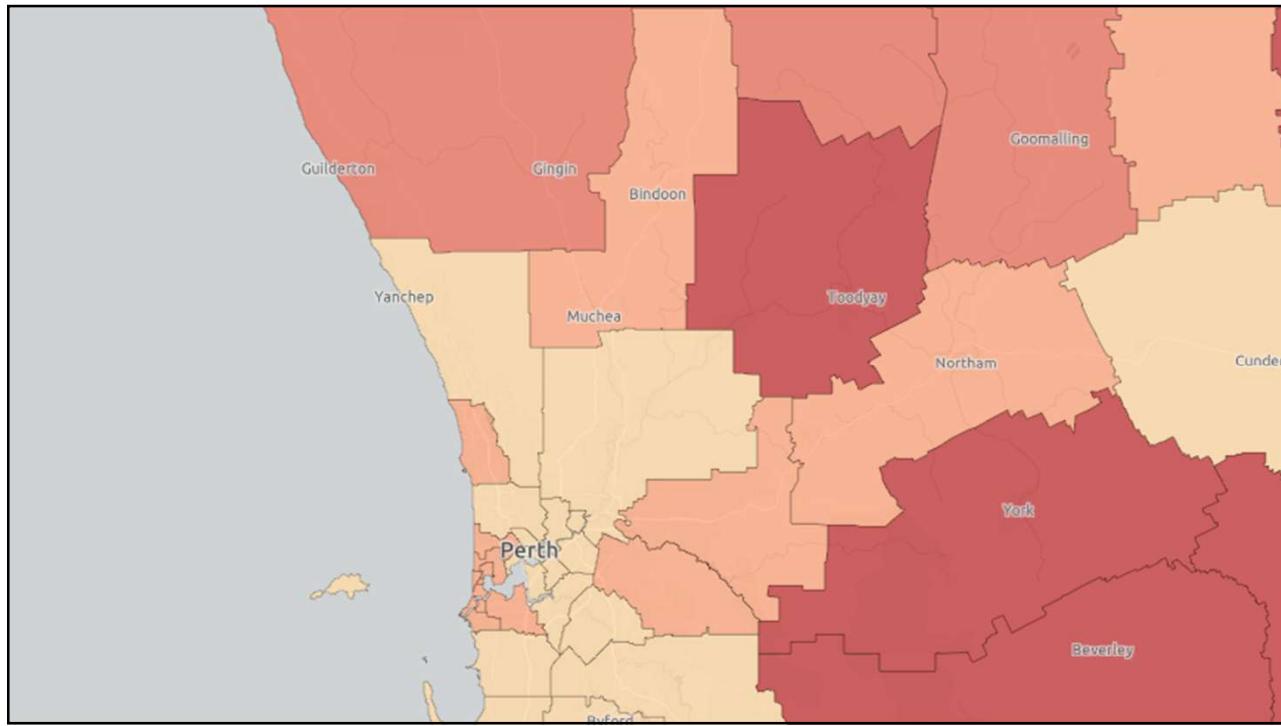
aeic@aeic.gov.au

1800 656 395

www.aeic.gov.au







Canberra

- Local Members key
 - Support access
 - What's on their lists?
- Get passes
- What they'll tell you
- You have 20 minutes at most
 - Who's talking?
 - How many can fit around a coffee table?
- Overview + details
- Budget Submissions
- When and which days?
 - Not Local Government week



State Government

- \$2 million per electorate last time
- Use your regional portfolio minister (Winton)
- Work WITH the government
- Treasury and Treasurer key

National Road, Transport and Infrastructure Congress 2025

Sean Fletcher, Silvio Brenzi

Summary of Topics

- EVs and AVs & Decarbonising the Infrastructure Network
- Road Accidents:
 - Fatalities have increased nationally for the fourth year in a row
 - Serious injuries are up by 30%
- Asset Management
 - Rolling out broad treatments (similar to Silvio's strategy at Vic Plains) eg RRSP
 - Keep it simple. Successful strategies by Aussies in other countries eg water supply programs
- Use more recyclable materials in roads - this is going to be a huge waste recovery income stream opportunity eg foamed bitumen is flood resistant
- Advocating in Canberra effectively
- Accessing Infrastructure Funding
- Road Safety Programs:
 - TAC Program - Victoria. \$200M to 79 LGs for road safety programs. 100% funding. Minimum is \$2M per LG
 - RRSP - WA
 - Importance of having a road safety plans when seeking funding
- Where the freight task is heading and what are its components:
 - Sydney freight task as an example of what happens the world over
 - Inland Rail Project - 1 600 kms Melbourne to Brisbane. Tranche 1 is completed
 - Autonomous Port Project - Gladstone QLD
- The importance of building in a social outcome

Assistant Shadow Minister for Infrastructure Hon. Matt O'Sullivan

- Wants to see the Regional Road Safety Program as a National Program
- Local Government's Case for non competitive funding
 - Sympathetic but there has to be some process in place
 - Wants to deliver on a needs basis
- The issue re Victoria Plains (and many local governments) is the multiple impacts on roads to meet the Government's Agenda
 - Energy Transition
 - Housing
 - Economic Diversification with Social Outcomes:
 - Mining
 - Freight Task
 - Space/Visitors
 - Other Tourism
- Wants to keep engaging with Vic Plains and others

Advocacy in Canberra – Order of Effectiveness

1. Local Government ROC (or Group) with State Association
 - A. High chance of success
2. Local Government ROC or Group
 - A. Good chance of success
3. Individual Local Government
 - A. Little to no chance of success, but always exceptional circumstances

Align with the Government's three requirements (See Minister King)!!!

Tell a story – keep it human!!!

Minister King

- Four major funding programs
- Review of speed reduction 110 kms to 70 kms. States will retain authority to impose
- Inland Rail Project - Melbourne to Brisbane
- Advocate for how you will deliver the Commonwealth's three priorities:
 - Economic Priorities eg Housing Supply
 - Social and Societal Priorities eg Disability Equity
 - Global and Environmental Priorities eg Net Zero Future
- All housing programs sit with Minister Clare O'Neil
- Prime Minister is the Bee's Knees

Infrastructure Australia - Funding

- Funding Programs
 - Four Permanent Programs
 - R2R - \$750M this year, \$1B in two years
 - Blackspot - \$150M PA and up to \$3M per project 100% funded
 - SLRIP - \$200M PA
 - Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program and Bridges Renewal Program (now a part of SLRIP)
 - Five Temporary Programs
 - Active Transport Fund
 - Growing Regions Program
 - Thriving Suburbs Program - focuses on suburban community project
 - Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program
 - Urban Precincts and Partnerships Program
- All programs will be in RPM from 1 December
 - Easier to administer - lodge funding applications and reporting
 - R2R will have a GIS (ARC) feature to allow immediate mapping of projects
- Rail Crossing Lights - Calingiri Intersection
 - SF and SB Spoke to both Departmental Assistant Secretaries (Deputy DGs) and other Directors
 - RALCSP is aware of SF's advocacy efforts via MRWA
 - Possibility of funding through SLRIP, Blackspot

Good Insights and Other Discussions

- Calingiri Bypass, Set Down Area, Industrial Precinct and Inland Port
 - Managing the Freight Task - Intermodal Point (Less large truck movements)
 - Economic Benefits - rates, lease fees, service station, other business
 - Social Benefits - add in things, experience
- Regional Waste Facility
 - Joint Project - AROC/Others/State
 - Meets State objective re waste
 - Economic Benefits - income stream
 - Social Benefits
 - Environmental Benefits

