

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK WALGA CONVENTION 2025

LEAN INTO LEGACY

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Theme: *Lean into Legacy*

Dates: 22–24 September 2025

Venue: Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre

Local Government Week 2025 – Day 1 Report

Welcome and Opening Address

Welcome to Country – Dylan Collard

Dylan Collard delivered an engaging *Welcome to Country*, drawing strong connections between legacy and place. He referenced the Indigenous names and cultural significance of places such as **Rottnest Island, Point Walter, Joondalup, Perth, and Fremantle**, reminding delegates of the importance of acknowledging heritage through place names.

Official Opening

Hon. Josh Wilson MP

Federal Member for Fremantle, Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy, and Emergency Management

Mr Wilson officially opened the conference, outlining federal initiatives addressing **climate change, coastal erosion, and renewable energy transitions**.

Key highlights included:

- **Engineering Fringing Reefs Project** – a legacy response to coastal erosion.
- **Shift from Carbon to Renewable Energy** – collaboration with the private sector under the *National Climate Risk and Adaptation Plan*.
- **Adaption Framework** – covers *10 regions, 12 hazards, and 8 systems* (including health, defence, and environment).
- **\$1 Billion Disaster Ready Fund** for waterways and drainage infrastructure.

- **10,000 EV Charging Points Rollout** and *Smart Adaptation* measures such as rooftop insulation in social housing.
 - Emphasis on **liveability, emissions reduction, and energy efficiency**.
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WALGA President's Address – Cr Karen Chappel

Karen Chappel, WALGA President, reiterated WALGA's role as a *trusted partner* of State and Federal Governments.

Key Highlights:

- Launch of “**West at its Best**” – the 2025 State Election campaign, guiding actions for the next four years.
 - **Federal Campaign Focus** – community resilience.
 - **Key Policy Win:** \$250 million *Regional Road and Safety Fund*.
 - Acknowledgement of key sponsors and announcement of her intention to **step down as WALGA President**, describing the role as “a tough gig”.
 - Played a pre-recorded address by **Hon. Kristy McBain**, Federal Minister for Regional Services and Emergency Management.
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Hon. Kristy McBain MP – Video Address

Minister McBain's message centred on *local government sustainability and economic reform*.

Key points included:

- **Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability.**
 - Support for **housing affordability** and **younger generations** aspiring to home ownership.
 - **Economic Reform Roundtable** – reduce red tape, increase housing approvals.
 - Programs: *Growing Regions, Regional Precincts, Safer Roads and Highways*.
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Keynote Address – Hon. Basil Zempilas MLA

Leader of the Opposition (WA)

Mr Zempilas emphasised local government as “*the best tier of government*”, closest to the community.

Highlights:

- Encouraged reflection on “*the legacy you want to leave*”.
 - Recalled his civic experiences as Lord Mayor of Perth, particularly at citizenship ceremonies.
 - Discussed **energy transmission** and **state land acquisitions in East Perth**, labelling them “not right”.
 - Noted lack of meetings for the **City of Perth Committee** since 2023.
 - Pledged to visit **all 139 local governments** in Western Australia.
 - Addressed **health system challenges** and the **Select Committee on Planning and Land Development**.
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Keynote Futurist Address – Dr Richard Hames

Dr Richard Hames, a former paediatric oncologist turned futurist, delivered a thought-provoking session on “*Tradition and Transformation.*”

Core Themes:

- **Local Governments as Bridges of Change** – the most robust level of governance.
- **Black Swan Events** – navigating chaos vs complexity in a changing world.
- **Seven Generations Thinking** – planning beyond the present.
- **Challenge Negativity and Status Quo** – innovation over path dependency.
- **Expanded View** – past, present, and possible future in every meeting.
- **Leadership and Stewardship** – promoting *collective responsibility* rather than individual heroism.

- **Direct Democracy** – emergence through technology, apps, and civic engagement.
 - **The Empty Chair Concept** – consider future generations in all decisions.
 - **Workforce Transformation** – rapid change and increased leisure balance.
 - **Collaborative Governance** – moving from competition to partnership.
 - **Integration of Indigenous Knowledge** – opportunity for regenerative agriculture and sustainable communities.
 - Advocated for **critical thinking, courage to ask unspoken questions**, and **informed electorates** amidst misinformation.
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Ministerial Address – Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA

Minister for Local Government and Disability Services

Minister Beazley introduced the **first Local Government Inspector**, describing it as a *legacy initiative* for improved accountability.

Key Points:

- Local Government employs **21,000 West Australians** and manages **\$59 billion in assets**.
 - Focus on **increasing housing and land supply**.
 - Review of **Local Government Election Frequency** – proposal to shift from biennial to **four-year terms** to reduce disruption.
 - Improving **accessible voting** – exploring telephone and assisted options for over **515,000 people with disabilities** in WA.
 - Emphasis on **sustainability and functionality** – creating a future-fit local government sector for the next 200 years.
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Panel Discussion – “State of Play”

Moderator: Jessica Page (The West Australian, State Political Editor)

Panellists:

- Rhys Williams MLA (Mandurah)
- Laurel Cayoun MLC (Whip)
- David Bolt MLA (Shadow Minister for Housing, Climate and Science)
- Kirrillee Wark MLA (Shadow Minister for Local Government and Fisheries)

Discussion Themes:

- **State–Local Partnerships** – stronger collaboration and understanding of limited local resources.
 - **Four-Year Terms & Compulsory Voting** – addressing voter fatigue and extremism in candidacy.
 - **Housing and Regional Development:**
 - 34,000 on housing waitlists; construction costs doubled.
 - Calls for faster builds, workforce training, and regional decentralisation.
 - Recognition of “NIMBY” challenges and need for consultation.
 - **Emergency Services Levy** – concerns over State control and property valuation methods.
 - **Waste Management** – community engagement and enforcement balance.
 - **Leadership in Politics** – ongoing commitment to community-led decision-making.
 - **Energy and Infrastructure Planning** – bipartisan visioning and inclusion of local government in renewable transition projects.
 - **Rate Freezes** – deemed financially irresponsible; need for realistic resourcing
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LGIS Presentation

LGIS reported that **\$21 billion in assets** are managed under its programs.

- **Claims increased** from last year, but **workers' compensation down 40%**.
 - Noted a rise in **cybersecurity risks**.
 - **\$7 billion** invested in protection and resilience initiatives.
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AGM 2025 – Key Issues Raised/Passed

1. **Increase Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) Medical Facilities cost adjuster** for smaller councils, especially health service contributions.
 2. **Homelessness** – requires intergovernmental collaboration and wrap-around services. Increase cultural specific short term accommodation.
 3. **Compensation for Unrateable Properties** (e.g. charitable organisations).
 4. **Mining Sector Rates** – calls to end restrictions and ensure fair contribution.
 5. **In person attendance at meetings in remote Councils be changed to 50%**. THIS MOTION WAS LOST.
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Conclusion – Day 1 Summary

Day 1 of Local Government Week 2025 established a strong foundation around the theme “**Lean into Legacy.**” Speakers and sessions collectively underscored:

- The **vital role of local government** as the cornerstone of democratic, resilient communities.
- The **need for innovation, collaboration, and future-focused governance**.
- The importance of **sustainability, inclusivity, and leadership stewardship** in shaping Western Australia’s long-term legacy.

Local Government Week 2025 – Day 2 Report

Theme: *Lean into Legacy*

Date: 23 September 2025

Venue: Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre

Breakfast Session – Glen McGrath

Australian Cricketer and Founder of the McGrath Foundation

Glen McGrath opened Day 2 with an inspiring presentation on “*Sport and Community*”, emphasising the role of sport in uniting people and fostering resilience.

Key Takeaways:

- **Four Principles for Success:**
 1. **Self-belief**
 2. **Work ethic**
 3. **Continuous improvement**
 4. **Having fun**
- Encouraged participants to “*know who you are*”, noting that many people never truly understand themselves.
- Discussed performing under pressure: focus on *process*, not *outcome*.
- Attitude defines achievement — “With the right attitude, it’s amazing what you can achieve.”
- Referenced **Cathy Freeman** as an example of focus and process in achieving excellence.
- Reflected on the late **Shane Warne**, describing his belief that he could win from any situation.
- Shared the growth of the **McGrath Foundation** – from 4 to **302 Breast Care Nurses**, now extending support to all cancers, including men’s health.
- **Impact:** Over **360,000 people** supported since 2005 with free community-based care.

- Shared his personal motto: “*Never say never*” — highlighting unexpected turns in his life including commentating, coaching, remarriage, fatherhood, and relocating to Queensland.
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Session: The Power of Collaboration

Anthony Vuleta – CEO, Shire of Kalamunda

Mr Vuleta presented on building collaboration through a **shared services model** involving **nine councils**.

Case Study: City of South Perth & Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

- Collaboration on **planning services**, overcoming large geographical separation.
 - Created a **dedicated shared email system** for communication.
 - Focused on **cost recovery**, not profit.
 - Benefits included:
 - Enriched planning experience across diverse applications (e.g. workers’ accommodation, short-stay accommodation, flood rebuilding, campsites, batching plants).
 - Improved **staff capability**, reduced **turnover**, and faster **application processing**.
 - Enhanced appreciation of **regional construction costs and timeframes**.
 - Cost: **\$2,500 per month**.
 - Both councils now **attend each other’s meetings**, strengthening team culture.
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Panel Discussion: Regional Economic Development Alliances

Representatives from the **City of Kwinana** and **City of Fremantle** presented on the **South West Regional Alliance**, which focuses on united regional advocacy and planning. The theme was clear:

“What’s good for the region is good for all of us.”

The Alliance's collaborative approach has led to significant progress in infrastructure and economic advocacy, including engagement with the **AUKUS defence initiative**. Lessons were learned from U.S. local governments supporting defence industries in San Diego, where councils directly invest in enabling infrastructure.

The Alliance rotates its **Chair annually** to ensure balanced representation and consensus. A **Parliamentary Secretary** has been assigned to help "unpack" cross-departmental government issues. Success, they said, requires **bold leadership** and **regional unity**, rather than competition.

Key takeaways from the panel discussion included:

- Embedding collaboration in **Corporate Business Plans** and **CEO KPIs**.
- Treating councils as **allies, not competitors**.
- Avoiding duplication and resource strain through **shared expertise**.
- Joint **grant writing** and **strategic project development** to lift regional capacity.
- Adoption of the new concept of "**decompetition**" – working together rather than against one another.

The discussion underscored that partnerships not only strengthen skills and resources but also enhance regional identity and sustainability.

Panel Reflections:

- Sustainability through **alignment with the Local Government Act, Corporate Business Plans, and CEO KPIs**.
- Emphasis on "**decompetition**" – moving from rivalry to alliance.
- Disagreements managed by finding **common ground** (e.g., Roe 8 handled through *information sharing only*).
- Inclusion of **elected members** in alliance projects strengthens legitimacy.
- Benefits identified:
 - Broader skills and experience base.

- Efficient grant writing and funding access.
 - Team capacity and workforce development.
 - Stronger voice for advocacy to State and Federal Governments.
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Presentation – ALGA President Cr. Burnett

A short **six-minute highlight video** was presented summarising ALGA's achievements for the year.

Key Points:

- Reiterated the **importance of reinstating the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability**.
 - Renewed advocacy to **increase Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to 1%** of Commonwealth taxation revenue, suggesting a *phased approach* to avoid sudden impacts.
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Breakout Session: Electricity and Energy Transition

Jai Thomas – Deputy Director General, Department of Energy and Economic Diversification

Mr Thomas outlined the transformational shift in WA's energy system.

Key Trends:

- Energy decentralisation – **550,000 smaller generation sources**.
- **40% renewable mix** achieved; **coal generation to retire by 2029**.
- **SWIS Transmission Plan** – under *Made in WA* banner, building local jobs and manufacturing.
- **550,000 rooftop solar installations** and **100,000 battery rebate scheme** – targeting 4 in 10 homes with solar.

Audience Q&A Highlights:

- **Community Batteries / Microgrids** – work in progress; autonomy possible but not yet recommended.
 - **EV Charging Infrastructure** – subsidies planned; fuel companies lagging behind.
 - **Streetlight Charging** – not viable in WA due to housing design; regulatory issues remain.
 - **“Charging Anxiety”** – emerging issue replacing “range anxiety”.
 - **Underground Power** – full conversion unlikely; selective rollouts continue to reduce bushfire risk.
 - Over **500 microgrid generators** already operational – WA “leading the way”.
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Sam McLeod – WALGA Policy Update

Provided an update on WALGA’s **energy transition policies (since 2023)**:

- Supporting the **retirement of Collie coal** operations.
 - **Rating Energy Systems** – ensuring community benefit frameworks.
 - **ARENA EV Project** – national first for bulk local government fleet and charger purchases (55 councils participating).
 - Assessment underway to measure **carbon abatement outcomes**.
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City of Stirling Presentation – EV Fleet Transition

- Began EV integration **7 years ago**; now **48 EVs** = 14% of fleet (target 30%).
- Vehicle mix: **BYD, Volvo, Hyundai Ioniq, MINI, Peugeot Vans, and 3 small EV trucks**.
- **18 chargers** (slow, staff, and public use).
- EV trucks used for:
 - Whitegoods collection
 - Street tree maintenance

- Rubbish pickup
 - Lessons:
 - Overcame range anxiety with driver training.
 - Essential to combine EV use with **solar power** and **load management** systems.
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Regional Perspective – Shire of Augusta–Margaret River

- Purchased **4 BYD Dolphin EVs and 3 BYD SUVs** (~\$270,000).
 - Received **\$400,000 grant** for vehicles and charging infrastructure.
 - **Benefits:** staff engagement and exposure to emerging technology.
 - **Challenges:** change management and adapting internal systems to support EV transition.
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Final Speaker – Adam Goodes

The final speaker for the 2025 Convention was **Adam Goodes**, one of the most decorated AFL players of all time, having played **372 games with the Sydney Swans**. A dual Brownlow medallist and **Australian of the Year**, Adam rarely attends speaking conventions, but welcomed the opportunity to return to **Western Australia**.

In his address, Adam reflected on his journey — from being drafted to the Sydney Swans to becoming a powerful advocate for Indigenous identity and community. Born to a mother of the **Stolen Generation**, Adam shared that he once felt disconnected from his heritage, not knowing his mob or what it truly meant to be Indigenous. Over time, through courage and cultural learning, he developed the confidence to understand and embrace who he was.

Adam spoke about the **public scrutiny** that often comes with leadership and visibility, urging the audience to reflect on their **purpose** and **resilience**.

“What armour do you have on today?” he asked. “If you have your armour on, no one can get to you. They might reach you — but never let them know they have got to you.”

He emphasised the importance of staying true to one’s **values**, **purpose**, and **community voice**.

“It’s one thing to be at the table,” he said, “and quite another to use your voice. If you’re going to be a leader, we need to hear your voice.”

Reflecting on his football legacy, Adam recalled breaking the **72-year premiership drought in 2005** and how sport was, at its heart, “fun.” Yet beyond the medals and victories, he believes his true legacy lies in the **culture** built within the team — one of respect, accountability, and growth — ensuring players “leave as better men than when they arrived.”

Today, Adam’s focus is on family and the future. He spoke of instilling **culture and identity** into his children — something he missed out on himself — and reminded everyone that:

“Legacy is not what we plan for, but what we create.”

Conclusion – Day 2 Summary

Day 2 of Local Government Week 2025 focused on **collaboration, innovation, and transition**.

Key takeaways included:

- The **power of partnership** – between councils, regions, and governments.
- The **energy transition** as both a *legacy opportunity* and *economic driver*.
- The value of **bold, future-oriented leadership** and **community-centred collaboration**.
- Continued emphasis on **resilience, sustainability, and shared vision** as cornerstones of the local government legacy.
- Adam Goodes’ message resonated as a powerful reminder that effective leadership begins with **authenticity and self-awareness**. Knowing who you are, standing firm in your values,

and using your voice to uplift your community are the foundations of genuine, enduring leadership — both on and off the field.

Relevance to the Shire of Moora – Take Home Messages / Actions

Following the insights and presentations from the Convention, several key actions and areas of focus have emerged for consideration for the **Shire of Moora**:

1. **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure** – The need to **upgrade local EV charging facilities** and encourage the **expansion of the Shire’s EV fleet** to align with emerging sustainability and transport trends.
2. **Regional Collaboration and Alignment** – A possible **recommendation to Council** to consider **realignment to the Mid West Regional Council** and depart the Avon Midland group. Current trends in **electrification, development, and strategic growth** are moving north of Moora, and this shift would support long-term planning objectives.
3. **Re-engagement with Neighbouring Councils** – The **reopening of joint discussions** with surrounding local governments, particularly the **Shire of Dandaragan** and **coastal shires**, to explore **shared opportunities for strategic planning and regional cooperation**.
4. **Shared Services and Capacity Building** – Strongly consider **sharing council services with other councils** to learn from each other, minimise **staff depletion issues**, and **engage and build capacity** within existing teams. Key areas to consider include **IT, planning, and building services**.

These recommendations aim to position the Shire of Moora for **sustainable growth, regional leadership, and future-ready community planning**.

These takeaways reinforce the importance of forward-looking leadership, collaboration, and adaptability to ensure Moora continues to thrive within a rapidly changing regional and economic landscape.

From the content and themes of the two days of **Local Government Week 2025**, the phrase “**Lean into Legacy**” can be interpreted as a

strategic and intentional focus on the long-term impact of decisions, actions, and leadership. It's about thinking beyond the immediate outcomes and considering what lasting influence your work will have on communities, infrastructure, the environment, and future generations. Here's a breakdown based on what happened over the two days:

1. Recognising Heritage and Place

- Dylan Collard's *Welcome to Country* emphasised Indigenous place names, reminding delegates that legacy includes **cultural acknowledgment and respect for history**.
 - The idea is that decisions today should honour past traditions while embedding respect into future community planning.
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2. Sustainable and Resilient Communities

- Federal and State ministers highlighted **climate adaptation, renewable energy, flood mitigation, housing, and community safety**.
 - “Lean into legacy” means planning infrastructure, energy systems, and housing policies that will **benefit communities for decades**, not just the next election cycle.
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3. Leadership and Governance

- Dr Richard Hames and Hannah Beazley stressed **future-focused leadership**, stewardship, and collective responsibility.
 - Legacy in this context is about **strengthening local government capacity, embedding accountability (e.g., Local Government Inspector), and ensuring democratic participation for the next 7–200 years**.
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4. Personal and Community Contribution

- Glen McGrath’s speech framed legacy in terms of **personal values, resilience, and giving back** (e.g., the McGrath Foundation).
 - His story shows that leaving a legacy isn’t just about policies—it’s also about **impactful, lasting contributions to people’s lives**.
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5. Future-Oriented Thinking

- A recurring theme was **thinking beyond the present**:
 - Decisions should consider **future generations** (“the empty chair” concept).
 - Emphasis on **innovation, collaboration, and adaptability**, avoiding path dependency or short-term fixes.
 - Addressing systemic challenges like housing, energy, and disaster readiness to leave a **positive, enduring imprint**.
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In essence: “Lean into Legacy” means making choices today that intentionally create a positive, sustainable, and enduring impact—on people, communities, culture, environment, and governance. It’s about responsibility, foresight, and acting with future generations in mind.

Submitted to Shire of Moora Council, October 2025.

