



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



# Local Government Advisory Board

## 2023-24 Annual Report



# Local Government Advisory Board Annual Report 2023-24

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

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If you would like more information, please contact the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

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## Acknowledgement of country and peoples

DLGSC acknowledges the Aboriginal people throughout Western Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands, waters, and communities in which we operate. DLGSC 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.

## Disclaimer

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## Acting Chair's Report

The Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) would like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of local governments to consolidate and strengthen our Western Australian communities throughout 2023-24.

This follows the cooperation and commitment of the sector during the previous financial year, where local government reform was a major focus of the State Government.

Ahead of the October 2023 local government elections, 68 local governments implemented significant changes to their ward and/or representation structures to meet reform requirements. These changes included:

- requiring public election of the mayor or president for all larger councils
- abolishing the use of wards for smaller local governments
- aligning the size of councils with the size of the population of each local government area.

As a result of these changes, 79% of local governments in Western Australia now operate without a ward structure, compared to 70% of local governments prior to the implementation of local government reforms.

As local governments come to the first anniversary of the implementation of these changes, we hope that they are benefitting from the improved efficiency and effectiveness that the reforms were designed to bring.

I would also like to express my genuine appreciation to all Board members and deputies for their ongoing contributions and support throughout 2023-24. They always deliver a professional, knowledgeable, and independent approach to the decision-making process, which ultimately benefits the local government sector and wider community.

I would like to publicly acknowledge the work of Councillor Dan Bull, former Chair of the Board who resigned in March 2024, after two and a half years in the role. During that time Dan led the Board with dedication and commitment. His leadership and contribution as Chair of the Board will be missed not only by the Board, but by the wider local government sector more broadly.

I would also like to thank our executive staff, Julie Craig, Taryn Cox and Leah Horton; and former executive staff member Emma Johns, who provided support to the Board throughout the year. Their knowledge and support help the Board operate in an efficient and effective manner



**Amy Halliday**

Acting Chairperson – Local Government Advisory Board

30 June 2024

## 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, and 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 that the Minister may direct, in accordance with the Act.

## Minister responsible

Hon Hannah Beazley MLA – Minister for Local Government; Youth; Minister Assisting the Minister for Training and Workforce Development.

The Board would like to acknowledge the previous Minister, Hon David Michael MLA, following his departure from the Local Government portfolio in December 2023.

## 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 is publicly available on the [Local Government Advisory Board webpage](#)<sup>1</sup> and 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. This statement is also available on the Board's webpage.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/local-governments/boards-and-commissions>

# 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 interest 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 will 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 this 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. The Chair is appointed by the Minister. The Minister also appoints two members from nominations usually made by the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), and one member from nominations usually made 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).

Four deputy members are also appointed 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
Vacant*	Chairperson	Minister for Local Government	
Mrs Bana Brajanovic**	Deputy Chairperson	DLGSC representative	31 August 2026
Mr Anthony Vuleta	Member	LG Pro	31 August 2024
Cr Russ Fishwick	Member	WALGA	31 August 2024
Cr Caroline Knight	Member	Minister for Local Government	31 August 2024
Ms Amy Halliday	Deputy to the Deputy Chairperson	DLGSC representative	31 August 2026
Ms Joanne Soderlund	Deputy to Anthony Vuleta	LG Pro	31 August 2024
Cr Karen Wheatland	Deputy to Russ Fishwick	WALGA	31 August 2024
Cr Jannah Stratford	Deputy to Caroline Knight	Minister for Local Government	31 August 2024

\*Cr Dan Bull was the former Chairperson of the Board, resigned his role 26 March 2024.

\*\* Bana Brajanovic is on extended leave from DLGSC as of 7 June 2024 for a period of 12 months and therefore her deputy, Amy Halliday has assumed her duties as Acting Chair of the Board.



## **Member profiles (as at 30 June 2024)**

### **Mrs Bana Brajanovic – Deputy Chair**

Bana Brajanovic was appointed as a member and Deputy Chair of the Board in 2023 until August 2026. Bana has taken 12 months' leave from DLGSC and during this time her deputy, Amy Halliday has assumed her duties as Deputy Chair and subsequently, Acting Chair of the Board. Bana has been employed with DLGSC as the Director of Policy and Legislation since 6 February 2023 and began extended leave on 7 June 2024. She was previously the Manager of Governance and Strategy at the Town of Victoria Park and has worked in governance roles with the City of Subiaco and the City of Stirling. Bana holds a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Human Resources Management.

### **Mr Anthony Vuleta – Member**

Anthony Vuleta was appointed as a member of the Board in 2016. He is presently appointed until August 2024. Anthony was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the City of Kalamunda since in June 2024. Prior to that, he was the Chief Executive Officer of the Town of Victoria Park since 2014. He is also a member and the current President of LG Professionals WA Board. Anthony previously served as the President of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (WA) and was a member of the Burswood Park Board.

### **Cr Russ Fishwick – Member**

Russ Fishwick was appointed as a member of the Board in 2016. He is presently appointed until August 2024. Russ has more than 40 years' experience as a serving local government officer and previously worked as the Executive Manager of Governance with the Town of Victoria Park, as well as Acting Chief Executive Officer. A councillor with the City of Joondalup, Russ was first elected in 2006 and has served three terms as Deputy Mayor. He was Chair of the Mindarie Regional Council for 10 years and is a WALGA Life Member and State Councillor. He was also appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 2010 and holds post graduate qualifications in business and management. He is active in surf lifesaving and is a Senior Assessor for Surf Lifesaving WA.

### **Cr Caroline Knight – Member**

Caroline Knight was appointed as a member of the Board in October 2021. She is presently appointed until August 2024. Caroline is currently the Deputy Mayor of the City of Mandurah – a role she has held since 2017. She has been a councillor at the City for 6 years before being elected to the current position. Caroline serves as the Deputy Chair of the Peron Naturaliste Partnership and chairs the Mandurah Environmental Advisory Group on behalf of the City. She was appointed as a WAPC Commissioner of WA Planning Commission in 2022 and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### **Ms Amy Halliday - Deputy member to Bana Brajanovic**

Amy Halliday was appointed as a member of the Board in 2023. She is presently appointed until August 2026. Amy currently works with DLGSC as the Manager, Sector Support. She has previously held a range of positions within DLGSC and has also worked as the Economic Development Officer with the City of Subiaco. Amy has a Bachelor of Social Science and Commerce.

## **Ms Joanne Soderlund – Deputy member to Anthony Vuleta**

Joanne Soderlund was appointed as a deputy member of the Board in September 2022. She is presently appointed until August 2024. Joanne is the current 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 in 2014.

## **Cr Karen Wheatland – Deputy member to Russ Fishwick**

Karen Wheatland was appointed as a deputy member of the Board in September 2019. She is presently appointed until August 2024. Karen has been a councillor with the City of Melville since 2017, where she is also a member of several committees. Karen is currently the President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association of WA.

## **Cr Jannah Stratford – Deputy member to Caroline Knight**

Jannah Stratford was appointed as a deputy member of the Board in October 2021. She is presently appointed until August 2024. Jannah is currently the President of the Shire of Koorda, a role she has held since 2020. She was a councillor at the Shire for two years prior to being elected to the position. Jannah has previously held the position of Chair of the North Eastern Wheatbelt Region of Councils (NEWROC) and is a member of the Eastern Wheatbelt District Health Advisory Committee. She is also involved with several sporting and community clubs in the Shire of Koorda.

## **Former Member profiles**

### **Cr Dan Bull – Former Chair**

Dan Bull was appointed as chair of the Board in October 2021 and resigned from the role on 26 March 2024. Dan is a councillor at the City of Bayswater — a role he has held since 2015. He was also the City's Mayor from 2017 to 2021. Dan is a member of a number of internal and external committees, including the Aged Care Governance Committee, the Policy Review and Development Committee and the Joint Development Assessment Panel. Dan graduated from UWA with a Bachelor of Laws.

## **Expiry of terms of office – August 2024**

The terms of appointment for the following members and deputy members expire on 31 August 2024:

- Mr Anthony Vuleta
- Cr Russ Fishwick
- Cr Caroline Knight
- Ms Joanne Soderlund
- Cr Karen Wheatland
- Cr Jannah Stratford

## **The year in review – Board activities 2023-24**

### **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.

#### **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 now include the modifications and changes brought about by activities or development.

The boundary change was not finalised as at 30 June 2024.

#### **Carried over from 2022-23**

There were no boundary change proposals under consideration by the Board in 2023-24 that were carried over from 2022-23.

#### **Carried over to 2024-25**

One boundary change proposal under consideration by the Board in 2023-24 will be carried over to 2024-25 and is expected to be finalised and published in the Government Gazette in 2024-25 (City of Joondalup).

### **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.

Because of the large number of local governments (55) that undertook reviews and made changes to their ward and representation structures in 2022-23 as a result of reforms, there were no reviews received by the Board in 2023-24.

It is anticipated that further reviews may be received ahead of the October 2025 local government elections.

#### **Carried over from 2022-23**

There were no ward and representation proposals under consideration by the Board in 2023-24 that were carried over from 2022-23.

## Carried over to 2024-25

There are no ward and representation proposals under consideration by the Board in 2023-24 that will be carried over to 2024-25.

## Governance of the Board

During 2023-24, the Board continued to maintain its governance framework, including any required updates of the 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](#).<sup>2</sup>

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

The Board's charter, code of conduct, meeting procedures and communications protocol were reviewed at a governance workshop held in October 2023, in accordance with the PSC's good governance processes and guidelines.

## 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 2023-24:

### Officers

Mrs Taryn Cox – Acting Manager, Board Governance and Reporting (from April 2024)

Ms Julie Craig – Strategy and Research Officer, Local Government Advisory Board

### Officers (former)

Mrs Leah Horton – former Manager, Board Governance and Reporting (July 2023 to April 2024)

Ms Emma Johns – former Strategy and Research Officer, Local Government Advisory Board (July 2023 to December 2023).

## More information

If you would like more information, please contact the DLGSC.

The Western Australian Local Government Advisory Board Annual Report 2023-24 is available in a variety of formats from DLGSC's website.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/local-governments/boards-and-commissions>

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