



**IN THIS ISSUE**

- *Bushfire volunteers*
- *Are your facilities' signage up to scratch?*
- *Water sensitive urban design*
- *Local governments striving towards healthy workplaces*
- *Local government CEO mental health*


# **RISK MATTERS**



Lvl 3, 170 Railway Parade,  
West Leederville WA 6007

 (08) 9483 8888

 admin@lgisw.com.au

 Visit our website and  
members section –  
lgisw.com.au

Don't have an LGIS members  
section login or forgotten  
your password?

No problem, simply contact  
us via the details above  
for assistance.

LGIS is the unifying name for  
the dedicated suite of risk financing  
and management services for WA  
local governments, established  
by the WA Local Government  
Association in conjunction  
with JLT Public Sector (part of  
the Marsh group of companies).  
LGIS is managed by JLT Public  
Sector (ABN 69 009 098 864  
AFS Licence 226827).

Risk Matters is an LGIS journal  
to keep members, their staff  
and elected members informed  
on topical risk management  
and insurance issues and LGIS  
programs and services.



## LGIS e-newsletter

Sign up today...

At LGIS we are committed to bringing  
you relevant information on local, national and global risk-  
related matters and issues impacting local governments in  
Western Australia.

Register now: [lgisw.com.au](http://lgisw.com.au)

## CEO's Message



**JONATHAN SETH**

CEO LGIS WA

jonathan.seth@lgisw.com.au

When we set about planning this edition, we didn't yet know the environmental crisis ahead, in regards to the bushfire disaster. Indeed, the 19/20 bushfire season is already being reported as one of the country's worst, with such tragic loss of life, and WA hasn't been left untouched.

During these times of stress and crisis, we are strengthened by the spirit shown throughout our local communities – particularly within our local government volunteer bushfire brigades. Did you know WA is the only state in the nation whose local governments have banded together to provide cover for their volunteer brigades?

In 2012 the bushfire portfolio of your LGIS Mutual Scheme was born. In this edition of Risk Matters, you can read about how your volunteer bushfire brigades are protected, as well as the ever growing need for risk management services and procedures in emergency. In a time full of stress, we also look at ways to cope during a crisis and build resilience.

We have a range of other topics within this edition, including managing risks around water sensitive urban design; the top ten improvement opportunities for aquatic centres; local governments excelling at building healthy workplaces; and the recent LG Professionals report into CEO mental health in WA. Joanne Eggleston, one of our HR risk management experts also walks through the benefits of mediation within the workplace.

I do hope you enjoy this edition, and if you have a question for our Ask an Expert column, please send it through to our editorial team at [olivia.lawley@lgisw.com.au](mailto:olivia.lawley@lgisw.com.au)

As always, if you have any questions about the magazine, or if you'd like to discuss any matter regarding your membership, cover, claims, or risk management services with LGIS, please contact me directly on 9483 8855.

**Jonathan Seth**  
CEO

# Volunteering on the frontline

**Volunteer bushfire brigades are an integral part of many local governments' services to their community.**

The country is currently in the midst of a crisis of a magnitude we've never seen before – indeed, the 2019/20 bushfire season is claimed to already be the worst bushfire season in history, and it's not over yet.

At a time like this many members will reflect on their own preparedness, including their bushfire volunteer brigade and emergency plan for the broader community. Bushfires often require all hands on deck, and as such volunteer brigades provide invaluable support to the community and Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) in such emergencies.

Volunteer bushfire brigades are staffed with committed members of the community, and the work they do is often done in very high risk environments. Therefore, members who have volunteer bushfire brigades are required to obtain and keep current insurance for volunteer fire fighters in accordance with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* (prior to 16 September 2017) and the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998* (as amended) Part 6B. In Western Australia, local governments have been working together since 2012 - through your Mutual Scheme - to protect bushfire volunteers.

## What's covered?

The following protection offered to bushfire volunteers while under normal brigade (as per the *Bush Fires Act 1954*) activities:



### Personal injury

Protection applies when a volunteer firefighter (or anyone acting under the control of the local government's Bushfire Control Officer) suffers an injury caused by undertaking normal brigade activities. The entitlements mirror the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act (1981)* and follow the prescribed amounts as gazetted by WorkCover WA every year. In the event that a volunteer is injured, priority should be given to seeking medical treatment. Once the volunteer or their representatives are able to, they can lodge a personal injury claim with you, which you can then forward to LGIS for processing.



### Motor vehicle and plant damage

Protection applies when there is loss or damage to appliances, equipment and apparatus owned by a bushfire brigade or privately owned.



### Personal property

Volunteers who are members of a local brigade may sustain accidental damage to or loss of their personal property whilst they are actively engaged in duties designated to them and deemed "normal brigade activities".

Personal property is generally considered to be clothing and items normally worn or carried on or kept with the person. This includes items such as glasses and mobile phones which can be lost or damaged whilst the volunteer is performing their duties.

The Scheme will consider claims for personal property under these terms and should loss or damage occur we would encourage the volunteer to report the matter to their supervisor or bushfire control officer for advice around submitting a claim to LGIS.



### Third party liability

Whilst conducting activities during fire control and fire control management practices there may be instances where volunteers need to act decisively in order to reduce or mitigate risk of the spread of fire.

As a result of this there may be an occasion where damage to property or injury to third parties could occur and a volunteer may be considered personally responsible. Whilst there are immunities under relevant and appropriate legislation available, the Scheme will also provide cover for volunteers who are acting in accordance with the duties assigned to them and in accordance with the *Bush Fires Act 1954* (as amended).

Should any volunteer be made aware of any likely action against them personally, they should report the matter to their supervisor or Bushfire Control Officer for advice around advising LGIS.




## Challenges

Ongoing provision of bushfire cover has not been without its challenges over the past few years, particularly with the March 2019 WA Supreme Court decision setting a precedent for insurance liability in the event of the death of a bushfire volunteer.

This decision, coupled with legislative amendments increasing death benefits entitlements, following on from amendments extending the insurance liability to cover prescribed cancers, has unavoidably

forced the cost of cover up over the previous financial year. Pleasingly, however, in 2018/19 large claims were finalised for significantly less than the initial estimates, and the number of new bushfire claims was a welcome reduction with 22 new bushfire volunteers personal accident claims received from LGIS members this year.

Your LGIS bushfire portfolio team are always looking at how to best support and protect your local government and bushfire volunteers. 

## Claims procedure

1.



*If a volunteer is injured during the course of their duties, immediate medical treatment should be sourced.*

*Claimant completes relevant claim forms (found on LGIS website), and the local government's Fire Control Officer completes the Bushfire Declaration form.*

2.



3.



*All claim documentation (including above, as well as attending physician statement etc.) to be sent to LGIS.*


4.

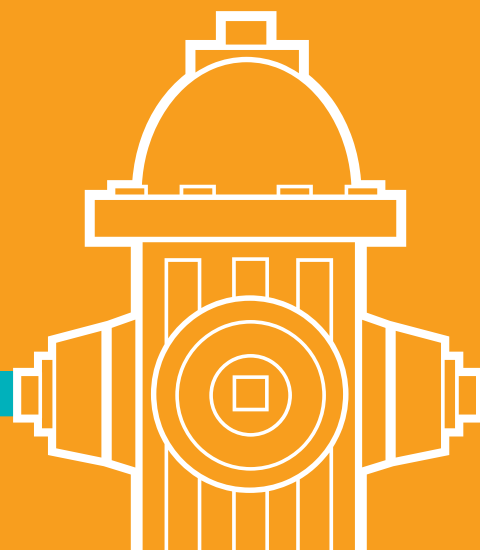


*Pursuant to the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998, the volunteer is entitled to receive compensation for loss of wages, medical costs incurred, and rehabilitation services.*

5.



*If the volunteer suffers personal property loss or damage, this will also be subject to compensation. *



## Prescribed cancers

As per the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998* (amended), local governments have the responsibility to provide personal accident cover for all registered bushfire volunteer firefighters should they sustain an injury and/or contract a disease whilst undertaking normal brigade duties.

A 2017 change in legislation expanded this cover to include 12 prescribed cancers, enabling bushfire volunteer firefighters the benefit of a rebuttable presumption (an assumption taken to be true unless contested otherwise) to help them access compensation entitlements. This means, for the purpose of bushfire claims, it will be assumed the cancer was a result of the volunteer's exposure to the hazards of a fire in the course of their duties.

The 12 prescribed cancers are:

- ▶ Primary site brain cancer
- ▶ Primary site bladder cancer
- ▶ Primary site kidney cancer
- ▶ Primary non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- ▶ Primary leukaemia
- ▶ Primary site breast cancer
- ▶ Primary site testicular cancer
- ▶ Multiple myeloma
- ▶ Primary site prostate cancer
- ▶ Primary site ureter cancer
- ▶ Primary site colorectal cancer
- ▶ Primary site oesophageal cancer

To lodge a claim, the volunteer needs to complete a Bushfire Claim Form and submit it along with a Bushfire Declaration Form and a Bushfire Attending Physician Statement. Each of these forms can be found on the LGIS website.

The date of injury is the day on which they become totally or partially incapacitated for work, or the day on which they are first diagnosed by a medical practitioner as having contracted a specified disease - whichever comes first.

The qualifying period set out in the legislation will depend on whether the volunteer had completed a period of firefighting service or the aggregate time of the volunteer being exposed to the hazards of a fire scene in the course of normal brigade duties. The onus of proof falls to the volunteer/local government, and part of this is to show the volunteer attended five hazardous fires per year for five years. Maintaining a register is the easiest way to do this – without proof, it becomes more difficult for the claim to be accepted.

For more information on bushfire volunteer firefighters' protection policy entitlements and claims process, please contact your LGIS member services account manager on 9483 8888.

### The importance of a clear registration process

When bushfire volunteers join a local brigade, they must undergo a volunteer induction (to familiarise them with your local government, and the occupational safety and health standards and expectations). Following this, your appointed Bushfire Control Officer should have set processes to follow for their induction, including enrolling them in any refresher courses with DFES, and maintaining an up to date register (as also mentioned in the section prior).

Experience during major bushfires has shown that a lack of timely and critical information of personnel operating at an incident can lead to injuries and fatalities.

'Red flag warnings' are used to communicate actual or impending hazards to all personnel at an incident. Issues like weather changes, hazardous materials, significant changes to fire behaviour, or equipment failure can have significant effect on operations. For this reason, the red flag warning system should be adopted to ensure critical communications are received and receipt is acknowledged.

T Cards provide a standard method of identification of brigade appliances and crews at incidents. T Cards help the incident management team keep accurate records of personnel and vehicles on the ground.

T Cards use a colour system to easily identify different appliance types and the different roles held by various personnel. Each appliance must have a supply of correct T Cards.

### Personal protective equipment

The uniform, personal protective equipment, and dress standards for bushfire volunteers are set out by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. Full information can be found in the *DFES Directive 1.3 – Dress and Grooming*, however the matrix for volunteer PPE is as follows:

<b>Head</b>	1x Level 2 helmet 1x Level 1 helmet 1x Sun hat 2x Flash hood 1x Safety glasses 1x Safety sun glasses (Bifocal option available)
<b>Feet</b>	1x Level 2 firefighting boots 1x Chemical resistant boots
<b>Waist/Leg</b>	2x Level 1 cargo pants 1x Level 2 over trousers 1x Over trousers braces
<b>Torso</b>	1x Level 2 tunics 1x Level 1 tunics 1x Wet weather jacket
<b>Ancillary</b>	2x Level 1 gloves 1x Structural gloves 1x Helmet torch 2x Gear stowage bags 1x Bushfires respirator

**It is important to note that approval for some uniform items may be required and the allocation of some items is dependent on the individual's qualification and role.**

# Coping emotionally with loss

Many Australians have started the new year anxious and alarmed with unprecedented bushfires engulfing parts of the country.

Many people will be affected – whether directly or indirectly – by bushfires, so during this time of loss, it is imperative to make sure you and those around you are coping emotionally.

These tips are not only beneficial for bushfire season, but can be applied during any complex time of stress and loss.



## Recovery and coping

It can be difficult to take care of yourself during the middle of a disaster with so many other worries preoccupying your mind. However, it is an important time to think about your personal resilience, healing and a sense of normality. Some self-care strategies you may want to consider include:

- ▶ Practice stress-reduction techniques (healthy self-talk, regular exercise, meditation and deep breathing).
- ▶ Don't be too hard on yourself; allow yourself to feel sad, cry and/or release negative emotions in a healthy manner.
- ▶ Don't feel guilty; give yourself permission to feel good. It is perfectly normal for you to have periods of joy even when coping with loss.
- ▶ Break tasks into smaller, more manageable steps and work through them one at a time.
- ▶ Make small decisions daily in order to feel like you are regaining control of your life.
- ▶ If possible, postpone major life decisions (e.g. switching jobs).
- ▶ Challenge unhelpful thoughts; lower your expectations of what you "should be doing."
- ▶ Don't isolate yourself too much; spending some time with people is a healthy part of recovery.
- ▶ Talk about your ordeal with friends, family, other victims and people within the community.
- ▶ Seek professional assistance if needed (e.g. from a health professional, psychologist or counsellor – consider engaging your local government's EAP program).
- ▶ Take advantage of community support. Remember that you do not have to go through this alone.
- ▶ Be positive; focus on what you are thankful for in spite of your loss.
- ▶ Stay away from unprescribed mood-altering substances, such as alcohol and other drugs.
- ▶ Establish or re-establish routines – familiar patterns of mealtime (eat well-balanced meals) and bedtime routines (maintain a normal sleep/wake cycle and get plenty of sleep) are important.

It is normal to experience several stages of grief after any type of loss, including shock, anger, depression and hopelessness. However, over time these feelings will ease and people can reach a stage of acceptance. Positive feelings can begin to re-emerge as the focus shifts more and more towards the future.

**LGIS are able to provide debriefing services as a result of critical incidents such as fires and other traumatic events. If you would like to know more about how to support your workforce or particular workers who are going through grief and loss after fire, please contact the LGIS HR risk management team on  9483 8826.**

# ASK AN EXPERT



## GREG COOK

Senior Risk Consultant, Emergency Management

Greg has a wealth of experience in emergency operations and emergency risk planning/training.

Greg works with local governments to meet the organisational requirements for managing emergencies, as well as at a strategic level for emergency management and the reduction of risk to the organisation and community. In doing so, Greg is involved in conducting community centred emergency risk management projects in partnership with local governments.

## Q: How can I prepare my community for an emergency?

In times of strife, communities look to their leaders for guidance, and in today's environmental climate unfortunately the likelihood of such environmental emergencies occurring is on the rise.

### Bushfire

Sadly, given the context of events occurring around the nation at this time, bushfires and the devastation they bring need no introduction.

In WA, local governments have a major role to play in the management of bushfire risks across the prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery phases.

The consequences of bushfire risks often manifest during times of crisis so we encourage you take a proactive approach to allow informed decisions to be made and adequate responses to be prepared prior to them eventuating.

LGIS can assist you in the development of bushfire risk management policy and procedures, including the assigning of bushfire risk ratings and high risk bushfire areas.

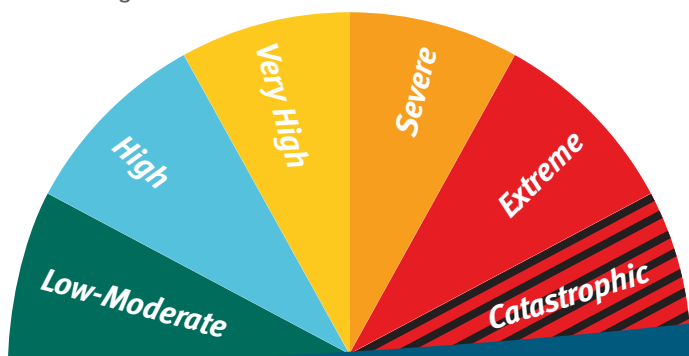
In catastrophic bushfire conditions, a fire can be intense enough to melt metal; the only option is to leave the risk area before it's too late. Communities who are threatened or impacted by emergencies need to have timely and accurate information so they can make informed decisions.

The need for public information, including the issue of emergency alerts and warnings, is to be considered during all phases of a bush fire.

Your local government should have a procedure in place for alerting the community and liaising with DFES in times of an emergency.

As a starting point, it is imperative to understand the fire danger ratings and bushfire warning systems and to keep your community informed.

During bushfire season, the fire danger ratings tool can assist in monitoring conditions:



### Catastrophic

The worst conditions for a fire. Homes are not designed or built to withstand a fire in these conditions. The only safe place is away from bushfire risk areas.

### Extreme

### Severe

### Very High

Seek out information and be ready to leave or stay and actively defend your property if a fire starts. Only stay if you are 100% prepared.

The bushfire warning system aims to provide information on a bushfire once it has started. The alert level reflects the threat to life and property:

### Emergency Warning



An out of control fire is approaching fast. You need to act immediately to survive. If you haven't prepared your home it is too late. You must leave now if it is safe to do so.

### Watch and Act



A fire is approaching and is out of control. Put your plan into action. If your plan is to leave, make sure you leave early. Only stay if you are mentally, physically and emotionally prepared to defend your property and you have all the right equipment.

### Advice



A fire has started but there is no immediate danger. Stay alert and watch for signs of a fire.

### Cyclones

An average of 13 cyclones occur in Australia each year, and north Western Australia is the most cyclone-prone region in the country, particularly in the area between Broome and Exmouth, which averages one severe cyclone per year.

Cyclones of varying intensity generally occur between November and April, though the chance of very dangerous category 3, 4, or 5 cyclones is highest in March and April.

### Risks

Cyclones can cause death, injury, and major structural damage. They can also disrupt essential services like electricity, water, and gas.

When cyclones come through, it's likely there will be extensive road closures, loss of communications, airport and port closures, food shortages, vegetation damage, and soil erosion.

### High

### Low-Moderate

Be vigilant. Check your fire plan and continue to monitor conditions as they can change quickly.

A cyclone is a low pressure system that forms over warm tropical waters and has winds of more than 90km/h. Winds can reach as high as 280km/h, which can turn objects into deadly missiles – and winds in excess of 350km/h have been recorded offshore.

Flooding and storm surges cause the most deaths during cyclones. Flooding can occur when cyclones bring heavy rain, leading to drowning or people being stranded and isolated. A storm surge is a large, quick body of water that piles up against the shore when a cyclone hits the coast. It can cause extreme damage to property, wash away roads, and run ships aground.

#### Standard emergency warning signal (SEWS)

SEWS is a distinct warning sound used on radio and television, and sometimes through car-mounted speakers by the State Emergency Service (SES) during a cyclone and DFES during a bushfire. This signal means official information is about to be broadcast.

When deciding to issue SEWS, the authorities will consider the following four factors:

- ▶ Possible loss of life or a major threat to a large number of properties or the large scale environment
- ▶ Impact is expected within 12 hours or is occurring at the time
- ▶ A large number of people need to be warned
- ▶ One or more incidents are classified as destructive

SEWS is only used in emerging situations of extreme danger, when there is a need to warn people that they need to take urgent and immediate action to reduce the potential for loss to life or property from emergency events.

Such events will be restricted to:

- ▶ Cyclone
- ▶ Major bushfire/major urban and rural fire
- ▶ Tsunami
- ▶ Severe flood leading to residential inundation
- ▶ Intense rainfall leading to flash flooding and/or landslides
- ▶ Storm surge
- ▶ Hazardous materials emergency
- ▶ Biological hazard/major pollution, hazardous material or biohazard emergency
- ▶ Earthquake aftershock
- ▶ Dam failure/dam burst
- ▶ Public safety emergency

## Questions to ask yourself in preparing for an emergency

1. Have you prepared a plan and an emergency kit?
2. How will you secure boats, caravans, trailers, sheds, rainwater tanks, LPG bottles and solar panels?
3. Have your local government's bushfire/cyclone standards been released to the community?
4. Are the walls, roof and eaves secure on your properties?
5. Does your building insurance cover you for bushfire/cyclones?  
(As an LGIS Scheme member, LGIS Property offers this protection for all of your local government property assets.)
6. Are branches and treetops trimmed around your buildings?
7. Are your shutters and locks working?
8. Where will you turn off electricity, gas, and water supplies?

*If your local government needs advice on how to manage emergencies, or setting up procedures for such events, please contact the LGIS risk and governance team on 9483 8888 or your regional risk coordinator. 📞*



# Are your facilities' signage up to scratch?

The top 10 improvement opportunities for WA aquatic centres



In Western Australia, there are 130 local government aquatic centre facilities providing significant benefits to their communities. ”

Each year, there are over 10 million visits by patrons to these centres. Aquatic facilities are often a hub of activity for communities, especially those located in regional or remote areas. Providing more than just a place to swim, they help foster community development.

In addition to the proven health, social, and economic benefits these centres provide to their communities, they also employ more than 3,000 people across the state.

Royal Life Saving WA has partnered with LGIS for over a decade to conduct assessments across a selection of these facilities each year. The assessments measure the performance of each centre against a set of criteria. These criteria were established in

consultation with the Department of Health's *Code of Practice for the Design, Construction, Operation, Management & Maintenance of Aquatic Facilities*.

During the 2018/19 financial year, Royal Life Saving WA assessed 35 centres under this partnership. Of the centres that were assessed in this period, 22 were seasonal facilities and 13 were year-round facilities. The average assessment score was 96.05% - up from the previous year. Of the total items assessed across the facilities, the centres were found compliant for 4,430 of them, with 174 non-compliances and improvement opportunities identified.

The following top 10 improvement opportunities were identified in 2018/19:

1. Water depth signage at entry points
2. Water depth signage visibility
3. Facility entry signage – pool usage rules
4. No diving signage
5. Emergency exit signage – visibility in all conditions
6. Labelling of all pipes, valves and fittings for water and chemical feed lines
7. Flow direction indicators on pipes
8. Chemical manifests
9. Risk assessments on inflatable rides and devices
10. Signage for chemicals stored on site

The areas where most centres experienced some problems (or where there were opportunities for improvement) were in safety

signage, chemical safety, and emergency preparedness. These areas accounted for almost 75% of all issues reported. The first five of the top 10 items listed are all signage related, revealing that this is a significant issue present across many facilities.

Chemical safety was the next biggest area for improvement, with four of the top 10 items relating to chemical labelling and inventory. Other improvement opportunities centred around the use of inflatables, operational manuals and procedures and, most importantly, general patron supervision.

Interestingly, the centres exhibited very similar performance characteristics regardless of whether they were large or small, in metropolitan or regional locations, year-round or seasonal facilities.

Many of the items for improvement can be easily rectified by installing better signage and improving labelling. By increasing awareness of these common issues found among facilities, we encourage all centres to conduct a quick self-assessment of the top ten items listed above and to work on improving these before the centre is due for an official assessment.

For more information on managing the risks in your aquatic centres, contact the LGIS risk and governance team on 9483 8888 or your LGIS regional risk coordinator. 📞

# Managing the risks of sustainable design

The City of Wanneroo has utilised WSUD in biofilters and tree pits at Yanchep Beach Estate. Also pictured opposite.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) is often perceived as high risk, but it could be the way forward - and an exciting development opportunity - for many local government assets.

New ways of doing things are scary, and often WSUD assets create a change in practice.

## What is water sensitive urban design?

The National Water Initiative (the national blueprint for water reform, as agreed in 2004 by the Council of Australian Governments) defines water sensitive urban design as the integration of urban planning with the management, protection, and conservation of the urban water cycle. Urban water management aims to be sensitive to the natural hydrological and ecological cycles.

Water sensitive urban design assets are vegetated and don't perform like traditional drainage assets, like pits and pipes, but rather seek to achieve better urban water management, through the following objectives:

### Maintain or improve water resources

- ▶ Manage runoff from all rainfall events as high in the catchment as possible
- ▶ Maintain or improve water quality (surface and groundwater)
- ▶ Manage, protect and restore waterways and wetlands
- ▶ Minimise pollutants
- ▶ Retain native vegetation and natural landform
- ▶ Protect public drinking water source areas
- ▶ Safeguard the quality and availability of water resources for the future

### Manage risks to human life and property

- ▶ Provide adequate clearance
- ▶ Prevent flooding or inundation of upstream or adjacent developed areas

- ▶ Manage surface water flows to prevent damage to downstream infrastructure and assets
- ▶ Manage risk to public health from disease vector and nuisance insects

### Ensure the efficient use of water resources

- ▶ Minimise water use within developments
- ▶ Maximise water reuse including wastewater and harvested stormwater
- ▶ Consider all available forms of water for their potential as a resource to achieve highest value use

### Ensure that economic, social and cultural values are recognised and maintained

- ▶ Encourage 'multiple use corridors' and integrate water management measures into the landscape to enhance visual, recreational, cultural, public health and ecological values
- ▶ Implement water management systems that are economically viable in the long-term
- ▶ Plan and design high quality assets in accordance with sustainability and precautionary principles

## What are the risks?

As with any change in practice within local government, there is the risk of increased complaints from the community. Other risks associated with asset design and function can include:

- ▶ Poor design
- ▶ Inadequate maintenance activities
- ▶ Environmental degradation
- ▶ Traffic management during maintenance activities
- ▶ Safety – trips and falls, drowning
- ▶ Flooding
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Poor construction (if construction does not follow design)
- ▶ Poor amenity
- ▶ Lack of understanding around asset function and outcomes
- ▶ Governance – application of standards.

*“Water sensitive urban design works towards an environmentally friendly, sustainable future. Our aim is to enable excellence in integrated water cycle management and build the capacity of local governments to generate community centred outcomes.”*

*Shelley Shepherd  
Director, Urbaqua*

## How can you manage these risks?

There are definite benefits to implementing water sensitive urban design assets within your local government. However, it is important to recognise that every situation and design is different, and as such there is no 'one size fits all' – each opportunity requires a bespoke approach.

If you are concerned about risks from implementing water sensitive urban design approaches, a risk assessment must be undertaken.

It is essential to consider your local government's duty of care, particularly the Duty of Care principles from the *Civil Liability Act 2002*.

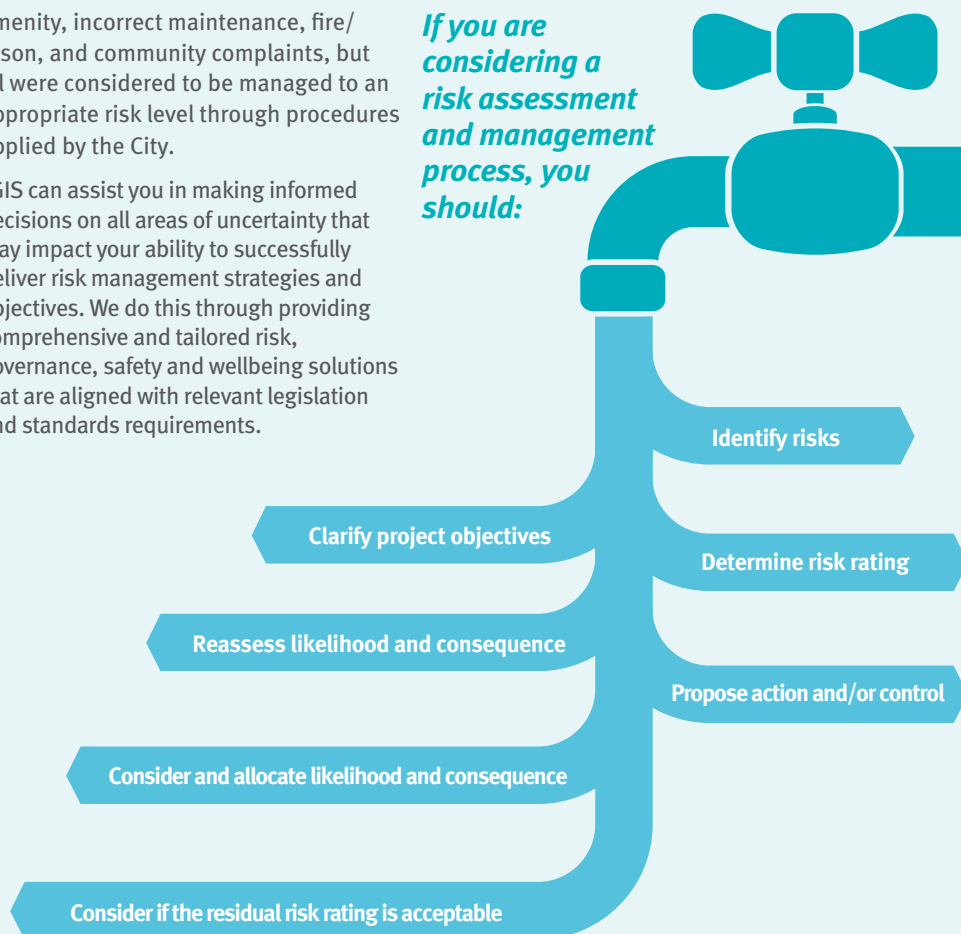
Standards are voluntary (except when referred to in legislation), which allows for innovation and flexibility, however standards are often used as a benchmark for consideration of risk. Other considerations include the probability and seriousness of the outcomes; the burden associated with precautionary action and the cost/benefit to the community.



How do we achieve an acceptable level of risk? When considering their own water sensitive urban designs, the City of Wanneroo undertook a risk assessment with a range of officers. The City identified that the most significant risk associated with vegetated WSUD basins was the loss of vegetation as a result of inappropriate watering regimes prior to handover. Other risks included poor

amenity, incorrect maintenance, fire/arson, and community complaints, but all were considered to be managed to an appropriate risk level through procedures applied by the City.

LGIS can assist you in making informed decisions on all areas of uncertainty that may impact your ability to successfully deliver risk management strategies and objectives. We do this through providing comprehensive and tailored risk, governance, safety and wellbeing solutions that are aligned with relevant legislation and standards requirements.

**If you are considering a risk assessment and management process, you should:**



For more information on managing the risks around your assets, contact your LGIS risk and governance team on  9483 8888, or your regional risk coordinator. 

# Local governments striving towards healthy workplaces

**LGIS is proud to promote the Healthier Workplace WA Recognition program to our WA local government members. Healthier Workplace WA (HWWA) is delivered by Cancer Council WA in partnership with the State Government through the Department of Health.**

Local governments across Western Australia are setting benchmarks for other workplaces in regards to employee health and wellbeing.

The City of South Perth's employee health and wellbeing program recently earned gold recognition from the HWWA program. You can read about the City's excellent health and wellbeing cultural transformation in our Autumn 2019 edition of Risk Matters.

Other local governments who are recognised by the Healthier Workplace program are the City of Cockburn, the City of Kwinana, the Shire of Mundaring and the City of Subiaco, who renewed their gold status this week.

The Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley recently achieved bronze status, while the Town of Victoria Park received silver recognition.

The Town of Victoria Park is a great example of a healthy local government, with the Healthy Community team coordinating the staff-focused program, nicknamed 'Well@Work'.

Victoria Park's CEO Anthony Vuleta said, "The Town of Victoria Park is proud to have a high staff uptake of our workplace health and wellbeing program, Well@Work.

"We are thrilled that staff have reported better health outcomes from participating in the program, and we are continuing to improve Well@Work based on employee feedback. Our overall goal is for a happy and healthy workplace for all Town employees."



The City of South Perth's Step into Life bootcamp.

The Town also have a dedicated program coordinator to oversee and implement program activities such as healthy eating and drinking guidelines, distribution of LiveLighter resources (a Cancer Council WA project encouraging people to consider the consequences of not following a healthy lifestyle and giving people the skills to make lifestyle changes), free gym and pool use, and end of trip facilities to encourage staff to be involved in physical activity before, during and after work.

There's also fortnightly deliveries of fresh fruit to all six (out centre) sites, 'lunch and learn' sessions covering a range of health and wellbeing topics such as nutrition and healthy cooking demonstrations, lunch time yoga, walking groups, health assessments, skin screening, flu vaccinations and mental health week initiatives.

A workplace that includes a health and wellbeing program for employees is a valuable investment for organisations as research indicates a healthy worker is likely to be more motivated, productive, take fewer sick days, and be safer. Health is also closely linked to happiness; by improving the health of your workers, they are more likely to lead happier lives which will contribute to creating a healthy and happy workplace.

For more information on HWWA and being recognised as a healthy workplace, visit [www.healthierworkplacewa.com.au](http://www.healthierworkplacewa.com.au).

**For more information on how LGIS can assist you develop your health and wellbeing program, contact Renee Wockner, LGIS WorkCare Services Manager, on ☎ 9483 8826. 📍**

## Local government CEO mental health

In 2018, Local Government Professionals commissioned the University of Western Australia to assess the health and wellbeing of local government CEO's in WA. Many of you will have seen the report, 'From workplace stress to workplace wellness: An assessment of the health and well-being of local government Chief Executive Officers in WA' since its release in November.

The findings show CEOs in the sector are facing unprecedented levels of work-related stress – indeed, they are suffering from psychosocial distress at nearly three times the national average of the general population.

The report states, "much of this stress is attributable to strained interpersonal relationships with elected members as well as

hostile ratepayers/ratepayers' associations, with overt and subtle bullying, harassment and intimidation of CEOs and, in some instances, their families, evident in Shires, Towns and Cities across the State."

LGIS is currently in discussions with LG Professionals on how to best support the sector, however our HR risk management team can provide assistance via a variety of psychological support services, including counselling, stress management training, and the implementation of a psychosocial risk assessment.

**For more information, please contact the LGIS HR risk management team on ☎ 9483 8826. 📍**

## ASK AN EXPERT

Each month we take your questions to one of our LGIS team members to answer. If you want to submit a question for next issue, email us [olivia.lawley@lgiswa.com.au](mailto:olivia.lawley@lgiswa.com.au)



### JOANNE EGGLESTON

LGIS HR Risk Consultant

Joanne has over twenty five years' experience within the public sector, working with individuals, groups and organisations for improved performance and wellbeing. Jo has worked in the areas of vocational rehabilitation counselling; equal employment opportunity and managing diversity; assessment, training and development; change management; conflict management including interpersonal mediation; organisational development; and leadership, team and culture development.

## Q: What is mediation, when is it needed, and how does it work?

Relationships are complex and ever changing – particularly in the workforce where an assortment of people with different personality traits and characteristics are under the one proverbial roof.

Healthy conflict exists in most dynamic and interactive workplaces, where employees debate and learn from each other's different perspectives. However other types of conflict in the workplace can be highly disruptive, both to the workers directly involved, and to others who may be caught up in the issues.

If left unmanaged or poorly handled, conflict can easily escalate, with further negative personal and organisational consequences.

**The negative impacts of conflict can include:**  
Personal:

- ▶ Increased stress
- ▶ Increased dysfunctional behaviours such as alcohol or drug misuse
- ▶ Diminishing personal responsibility and accountability
- ▶ Detrimental impacts on home and family life
- ▶ Increased incidence of psychological problems such as depression and anxiety

Organisational:

- ▶ Psychological workers' compensation claims
- ▶ Industrial relations issues
- ▶ Reputational damage
- ▶ Low morale
- ▶ Decreased productivity
- ▶ Closed communication
- ▶ Culture of blame
- ▶ Higher absenteeism
- ▶ Higher levels of emotional distress

If both parties are willing to work towards moving forward and improving their working relationship, mediation is a great option.

When there is a grievance to be aired out, mediation provides a safe space to do so – with a 'no blame' process and ground rules to provide a set structure for proceedings.

#### What is mediation?

Mediation is a future-focussed process. It typically aims to help two people discover a better way to work together. It isn't necessary for friendship to be an outcome, it is generally sufficient to just enable a professional environment where all parties are comfortable.

Workplace mediation is not about finding fault. It is a voluntary, no blame, and confidential system that can be highly effective for agreeing the way forward, especially as an early intervention.

#### How does mediation work?

When an issue or grievance is identified, and both parties are willing to work on improving the working relationship, an LGIS mediator can be called in to facilitate the process.

Mediation involves a two-stage process. Stage one is the pre-mediation phase, where the key parties in the conflict adequately prepare themselves to individually come together in a safe and supported environment. In stage two, the joint mediation phase, the parties identify and respectfully discuss what they need from each other for a better working relationship.

An agreement is drawn up, which both parties sign, and the LGIS mediator then works with local leaders in your organisation (e.g. a line manager or human resources professional) to establish effective monitoring and support.

#### When mediation isn't the answer

Mediation is not always appropriate and sometimes it may not be sufficient to resolve entrenched workplace dysfunction. In the event of complex matters involving high numbers of workers or long-standing issues, the LGIS human resources risk management team can provide consulting advice and conduct a workplace needs analysis.

This involves gathering information from each member of the workgroup and its leaders about their perceptions of the strengths, concerns and opportunities for improvement around the current people-related risks.

The resulting report presents an analysis of the key themes and recommendations to establish effective ways of working together to improve the workplace. We also assist with the implementation of solutions and seek appropriate resources as required.

**For more information on mediation or managing workplace conflicts, please contact the LGIS HR risk management team on 9483 8826.**



# Where we've been

## Great Southern Risk Forum

5-6 December 2019

Held over two days, and proudly hosted by the City of Albany, the 2019 Great Southern Risk Forum was tailored to include the risk management and risk financing issues that matter most to you. It was a great opportunity for local government workers to increase their knowledge and develop a greater risk appreciation throughout all areas of the organisation.

Congratulations to members from the region who were presented with their 3 Steps to Safety awards:

- ▶ Shire of Cranbrook
- ▶ Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup
- ▶ Shire of Jerramungup
- ▶ Shire of Plantagenet
- ▶ Shire of Gnowangerup





### *Injury management for stress claims workshop*

31 October 2019

This workshop was created for supervisors, managers, and return to work coordinators involved in the management and care of workers with stress claims or non-work related concerns.

Topics covered included:

- ▶ Pre-employment mental illness disclosure and non-work related mental illness
- ▶ Psychological hazard identification and risk assessment
- ▶ Early warning signs
- ▶ Claim process for psychological injury
- ▶ Medical diagnosis and best practice technique
- ▶ Communication and management strategies
- ▶ Return to work facilitation



## *Upcoming events*

**LG Professionals Finance Conference**

Date: 12-13 March

**LGIS Injury Management training for coordinators**

Date: 31 March

**LGIS Workforce Risk Forum**

Date: (TBC) May



[lgiswa.com.au](http://lgiswa.com.au)