



Shire of Augusta Margaret River 2025 Election Priorities

Executive summary

The Shire of Augusta-Margaret River faces a series of significant infrastructure and service challenges that require attention and investment from the Western Australian State Government. As the region grows, driven by population increases, tourism, and expanding industries, it is vital that local infrastructure, housing, and social services keep pace to support both residents and the local economy.

This report outlines key priorities for state government action ahead of the upcoming election, focusing on protecting natural assets, improving access to education and social services, addressing housing affordability, and upgrading critical infrastructure.

The AMR region, like other high-growth areas such as Busselton and Mandurah, is experiencing unprecedented population growth, putting significant strain on essential services, including education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Over the last five years, the population has surged by 17.9%, with no signs of slowing down. This growth has outpaced the capacity of existing infrastructure, creating critical disparities between high-growth regions and more stable areas. Without targeted action, these challenges will continue to exacerbate, impacting the quality of life for residents and limiting opportunities for future generations. The following priorities reflect the urgent need for state-level intervention.

As a major tourism destination for Western Australia inadequate support to the region via infrastructure, environment, and community investments runs the risk of undermining the regions ability to continue performing as a destination of choice.



2025

Election Priorities



PRIORITIES ON A PAGE

1

Protect Our National
Parks, a State
Tourism Asset

2

Improve
Access to
Education
and Social
Support

3

Address
Housing
Affordability



4

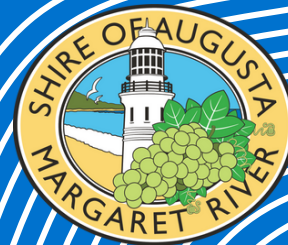
Support Economic
Development and
Coastal Management

5

Increased Funding to
Local Governments

Priority One

Protect Our National Parks, a State Tourism Asset



The Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park is a critical natural and cultural asset under increasing pressure due to environmental degradation and visitor numbers. The community urges the Western Australian State Government to take immediate action to preserve the park, taken from the community driven "6 Point Plan"

The Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, a key tourism and environmental asset, is under pressure from increasing visitor numbers and environmental degradation. The community calls on the State Government to implement the "6-Point Plan" that includes doubling resources for Parks & Wildlife Rangers, reinstating the Nindup Plain, and improving tourism and visitor management infrastructure. State support is also sought for fire management practices and backing insurance schemes for businesses affected by natural disasters or environmental decline.



Specific election requests include:

- 1 Increased Resources for Restoration: Double the number of Parks & Wildlife Rangers and allocate resources for invasive species control, native species recovery, and monitoring post-fire habitats.
- 2 Reinstatement of the Nindup Plain: Extend the park to include nearby private properties, remove blue gum plantations, and restore water flows essential to wetlands and karst systems.
- 3 Tourism and Visitor Management: Upgrade facilities such as car parks, signage, and toilets, and improve the Cape to Cape Track to enhance visitor experience.
- 4 Fire Management: Continue prescribed burns to reduce fire risk and explore traditional Wadandi burning techniques.
- 5 Support for Affected Businesses: Investigate a government-backed insurance scheme for businesses impacted by environmental decline or natural disasters.

Priority Two

Access to Education and Social Support



Invest in expanding educational facilities at Margaret River Senior High School, upgrading the hospital to meet current and future healthcare demands, and providing funding to local not-for-profits to address the region's unique social service needs.



Rapid population growth has left the Augusta Margaret River community underserved in terms of education and social services. Margaret River Senior High School is overcrowded, and the hospital cannot meet current or future healthcare demands. The community is also lacking sufficient social services. State investment is needed in order to expand educational facilities, upgrade the hospital, and fund local not-for-profits to address the region's unique needs.

Specific election requests include:

- 1 Margaret River Senior High School: The High School is the only high school for a geographically large and demographically diverse and growing region. Overcrowding at Margaret River Senior High School is evidence that educational infrastructure is failing to keep pace with growth. Immediate action is needed to address the strain on resources and ensure students receive adequate educational opportunities.
- 2 Margaret River Hospital: The Margaret River Hospital is already operating at capacity and unable to meet current or future healthcare demands. Investment is required to upgrade facilities and services to support the growing population.
- 3 Social Services: The AMR community needs improved access to essential social services that are currently concentrated in neighbouring regions, leaving local residents with insufficient support. Two specific asks are made of the state government:
 - Increase funding for existing social service providers in the South-West that enables them to provide place-based supports that directly service the AMR community
 - Consider an investment in local AMR not-for-profits who are servicing the community's unique needs.

Priority Three

Addressing Housing Affordability



Address the housing affordability crisis in the Augusta-Margaret River region, prioritise investment in essential infrastructure, support local affordable housing projects, and collaborate on solutions for key worker accommodation.



Housing affordability in the Shire remains a critical issue, driven by high property prices, low local incomes, and a limited housing supply. We call on the state government to urgently coordinate and invest in essential infrastructure, support affordable housing projects, and address key worker accommodation needs.

State investment in critical infrastructure, such as sewerage and drainage, is vital to enable higher-density housing development. Local investment in projects, like redeveloping underutilised public land, can significantly increase the availability of affordable housing. Additionally, providing housing for essential workers in sectors such as healthcare, education, and agriculture is crucial for the region's economic stability. Immediate action is needed to tackle housing affordability and ensure sustainable growth.

Specific election requests include:

- 1 Coordinated infrastructure provision, particularly of infill sewerage and drainage is required to support density targets within urban areas. This is beyond the scope of LG to provide.
- 2 Local investment in affordable housing, including at the Willmott Ave site in Margaret River (ex Water Corp depot).
- 3 Invest in road infrastructure to enable worker accommodation project at Lot 102 Bussell Highway, Cowaramup.

Priority Four

Infrastructure to Support Economic Development, Growth, and Coastal Management



State investment is urgently needed to upgrade sewer systems, expand the treated wastewater network, and support urban and industrial developments. Funding is required for the Gas Bay to Cape Mentelle coastal infrastructure plan, enhancing parking, pathways, and public amenities. Further investment in road safety and town centre improvements in Cowaramup and Augusta is essential to support local growth. Immediate action is needed to secure the region's infrastructure and future development.



Specific election requests include:

- 1 Extend sewer infrastructure provisions to support industrial areas, urban infill and into future growth areas.
- 2 Fund Margaret River's "Western Pavilion" to achieve universal access and provision for female participation in sports.
- 3 Expansion of the treated wastewater network to accommodate future growth areas.
- 4 Road safety improvements in Cowaramup town centre coming from the Cowaramup Integrated Transport Strategy.
- 5 Town centre improvements based on the Augusta Precinct Plan.

Priority Four

Infrastructure to Support Economic Development, Growth, and Coastal Management



Extending sewer infrastructure is vital to support these newly approved industrial areas, key urban infill locations, and future growth zones. Expanding these systems will enable continued economic development, facilitate urban densification, and ensure that future growth areas can be serviced appropriately. Equally important is upgrading outdated sewer systems to provide consistent service and prevent bottlenecks in both residential and commercial areas. Furthermore, the treated wastewater network must be expanded to accommodate future growth, enabling more sustainable water management practices that support both environmental sustainability and economic resilience.

Beyond industrial and urban needs, the region's rapidly growing residential population and high tourism rates are placing significant pressure on coastal infrastructure. Coastal areas, which are essential to the region's tourism economy, are vulnerable to environmental degradation if not properly managed. The Shire's Gas Bay to Cape Mentelle concept plan identifies the need for substantial state investment to enhance coastal infrastructure, including parking facilities, pedestrian pathways, and public amenities. These upgrades are necessary to increase visitor capacity, improve safety, and protect the environment from overuse. State funding is crucial to implement this concept plan and ensure the sustainable use of these high-traffic coastal areas.

Road safety improvements in the Cowaramup town centre, as identified by the Cowaramup Integrated Transport Strategy, are essential to improving the safety and functionality of the town. Investment in safer pedestrian and traffic flows will support local businesses, residents, and tourists alike. The town centre of Augusta also requires improvements, as outlined in the Augusta Precinct Plan. These necessary upgrades, including streetscape enhancements and public space improvements, are key to revitalizing the area and fostering economic activity.

Finally, the Margaret River's Western Pavilion requires state funding to achieve universal access and support for female participation in sports. With growing demand for inclusive sports facilities, this investment will promote gender equity in local sports programs and ensure that all members of the community have access to quality sports infrastructure.



Priority Five

Increased Funding to Local Governments



The Shire advocates for a review of the Financial Assistance Grants (FAG) and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCIP), with adjustments to account for the impact of high visitor numbers on local infrastructure. The Shire requests that the state government advocate for an increase in the FAG funding pool, alongside a review of the allocation and indexation methodologies to ensure more equitable distribution based on actual usage, not just resident population.

The Shire's position is that the following aspects of the Financial Assistance Grants Program should be reviewed; the quantum of the funding pool, the indexation methodology and the methodology of calculation.

Another funding stream that has been made available to local governments over the past few years is the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCIP), which has allowed Western Australian local governments to deliver approximately 2,000 local priority projects to date.

The Shire's position is that the design of the LRCIP is relatively efficient and effective, and is largely consistent with the principles of autonomy of Local Governments to identify local priorities, non-competitive program and low administrative costs.



Specific election requests include:

- 1 For the Western Australian state government to advocate to the federal government to review the federal assistance grants to ensure a greater overall funding pool, and that the indexation methodology accounts for non-resident demand (i.e. tourism) on local infrastructure.