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Federal Member for Bradfield
Minister for Major Projects,
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Mayor Troy Pickard
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

ALGA MAIL
ITEM No:
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Dear Mayor ^{Troy} Pickard

National General Assembly of Local Government

Thank you for your letters dated 24 September 2015 to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, the Hon Warren Truss MP, and to myself, regarding the resolutions arising from the 2015 National General Assembly of Local Government. As the matter raised falls within my portfolio responsibility, your letter to the Deputy Prime Minister was forwarded to me for reply. I am sorry it has taken me so long to respond.

The National General Assembly of Local Government is an important event, bringing together key stakeholders to share ideas and experiences to improve the productivity of the local government sector. I welcome the opportunity to respond to the resolutions.

I appreciate the time you have taken to bring these matters to my attention and I am pleased to provide you with the enclosed response relating to the Infrastructure and Regional Development portfolio.

Yours sincerely

Paul Fletcher

10 / 2 /2016

Enc

Response to 2015 National General Assembly of Local Government Resolutions

Resolution 29

COPY

Blacktown City Council NSW & Lockyer Valley Regional Council QLD

That this National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to contribute funding to transport infrastructure of national importance and that it undertakes appropriate consultation and engagement processes with local government on these projects.

Response

The Australian Government is committed to funding transport infrastructure of national significance through its Infrastructure Investment Programme. In funding transport infrastructure of national significance, the Government is undertaking a range of consultation and engagement processes. The Government has requested projects of national significance be submitted to Infrastructure Australia for their assessment and consideration in the 15-year Australian Infrastructure Plan and Infrastructure Priority List. Some Councils have taken this opportunity and provided submissions to Infrastructure Australia through this process. The Government has also requested new project proposals be submitted by the states and territories for consideration in the 2016-17 Budget.

Strategic Resolution 30

Wyndham City Council Vic

*Federal Funding for Urban Public Transport (Theme: Federal Financial Relations)
That this National General Assembly calls on the Prime Minister to: prioritise funding of major transport infrastructure projects based on their merits and cost benefits, rather than whether they are road or rail projects; and establish funding mechanisms for urban public transport projects in addition to the Asset Recycling Fund.*

Response

When prioritising transport infrastructure projects for funding, the Australian Government considers projects based on their merits and the cost benefit analysis. The Government's policy is that both road and rail projects, including urban public transport, can be considered for funding.

Resolution 31

North Burnett Regional Council QLD

That this National Assembly calls upon the Federal Government to establish a fund for road managers to enable the upgrading of roads for heavy vehicles to address the Heavy Vehicle strategy.

Response

The Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Programme (HVSPP) is an Australian Government initiative to improve productivity and safety outcomes of heavy vehicle operations across Australia, through funding infrastructure projects.

The objectives of the HVSPP are to:

- increase productivity of heavy vehicles by enhancing the capacity of existing roads and improving connections to freight networks; and
- improve the safety environment for heavy vehicles.

Since 2008-09, the Government has allocated \$217 million to projects under four rounds of the HVSPP. Proposals for round five closed on 10 February 2016.

Details on the programme parameters, how to apply and funding conditions can be found on the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's website:

<http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/heavyvehicles/>.

Projects are selected through a competitive, merit based process. Payments to all successful projects (including Councils) are made through National Partnership Agreements to state and territory governments.

Resolution 32

Etheridge Shire Council QLD

That the NGA seek to have the legislation around Fatigue Management (National Road Transport Heavy Vehicle Drivers' Fatigue laws) amended to exclude Local Government Councils as the legislation inhibits and impedes the short haul operations of a Council.

Response

In February 2014, the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) and regulations were introduced to deliver a national legislative framework to manage driver fatigue. The Australian Government understands the Local Government Association of Queensland raised concerns around the requirement that heavy vehicle drivers for local government complete a written work diary. This issue has been referred to the National Transport Commission (NTC) for consideration as part of the ongoing review and maintenance of the HVNL.

The NTC is working with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator on a national fatigue data strategy which will inform any potential policy changes to fatigue management. In the meantime, the fatigue management requirements under the HVNL will be maintained to ensure optimum safety and nationally harmonised arrangements for heavy vehicle drivers.

Strategic Resolution 33

Maribyrnong City Council VIC

The NGA calls upon the State, Federal and Territory Governments to develop effective environmental controls on trucks to respond to the projected growth in port and industry movements of freight over the next 20 years and to introduce tougher compliance standards for diesel emission particulate matter (PM2.5) as a priority.

Response

On 31 October 2015, the Government established a Ministerial Forum to conduct a whole of government review of vehicle emissions. The review will look at vehicle emission standards and testing arrangements, fuel quality standards and other measures that could improve the fuel efficiency and environmental performance of motor vehicles, including heavy vehicles. The Ministerial Forum brings together portfolios with responsibility for infrastructure, energy and the environment to examine policy settings as well as a range of Commonwealth commitments including Australia's 2030 target, National Clean Air Agreement, Direct Action Plan and National Energy Productivity Plan.

The Ministerial Forum held its first public consultation meeting on 7 December 2015. The next stage of the consultation process will be the release of a discussion paper seeking public feedback in the first quarter of 2016. Further information on the Ministerial Forum can be found on the Department's website:

<https://infrastructure.gov.au/roads/environment/forum/index.aspx>.

Resolution 34

Parkes Shire Council NSW

That the National General Assembly congratulates the Australian Government for establishing the Inland Rail Implementation Group headed by former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson OAM to fast track the development of the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Railway (MBIR). Currently the Federal Government has committed \$300 million to the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail to; finalise plans, engineering design and environmental assessments for Inland Rail. The development of the 10 year program early design work and approvals the commencement of early works and land acquisition (where required) and develop a detailed business case. The National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to now allocate funds in the forward estimates to ensure the construction of the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail to a modern-standard sufficient to drive modal shift from long-haul road to rail as we believe that it will bring economic and social benefits to regional New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria as well as the national economy.

Response

The Government is considering the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project in the 2016-17 Budget context.

Resolution 35

Blacktown City Council NSW

That this General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a high speed rail service between Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane, as an alternative to additional airports.

Response

The Government is continuing to consider what role High Speed Rail (HSR) could play in Australia's long-term transport planning. In 2013 the Government released a strategic study on implementing HSR between Melbourne and Brisbane, which can be found on the Department's website:

www.infrastructure.gov.au/rail/trains/high_speed/.

The Government's focus is directed at engaging with the governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory to determine their level of interest in HSR and to seek to confirm, preserve and protect the corridor. These are necessary steps before any decision could be taken to proceed with a HSR project.

Measures to confirm, preserve and protect the corridor are the responsibility of state and territory governments. In doing this, jurisdictions employ planning measures to ensure any impacts on the identified corridor are considered in land use and development processes.

Resolution 36

Moreland City Council VIC

That the National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) calls upon the Commonwealth Government to develop and enact a continuing funding package for public transport in all Australian States.

Response

When prioritising transport infrastructure projects for funding, the Australian Government considers projects based on their merits and the cost benefit analysis. The Government's policy is that both road and rail projects, including public transport, can be considered for funding.

Resolution 45

Strathfield Council NSW

That the National General Assembly of Local Government call upon the Federal Government to ensure that the State Governments fully test and model the required infrastructure and services in order to fully consider the impacts to the proposed and existing communities prior to developing and releasing dwelling targets and increased densities in urban renewal areas.

Response

The Australian Government has established a national cities agenda to improve the productivity, liveability and accessibility of Australia's cities through reforms that stimulate economic growth and ensure the future wellbeing of Australians. As part of the cities agenda, the Government will partner with state and territory governments to ensure coordinated long-term land use, transport and environmental planning drives improvements in Australia's cities.

Resolution 47

Etheridge Shire Council QLD

That the NGA seek to have the Federal Government and the Developing Northern Australia Taskforce commit to funding the core infrastructure to enable development across Northern Australia; furthermore the major transport routes across Northern Australia need to be recognised as part of National Highway No1.

Response

The development of northern Australia is a key priority for the Australian Government. On 18 June 2015, the Government released the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. The White Paper is a plan and a vision to unlock the potential and opportunities of the north. It focuses on building priority roads, developing water resources, removing red tape, building a sustainable workforce and ensuring effective governance arrangements.

Through the White Paper, the Government is committed to ensuring northern Australia has the appropriate infrastructure to support economic and population growth. To improve infrastructure in northern Australia the Government is focusing on funding high priority public infrastructure and making it easier for the private sector to invest in infrastructure.

The Government is focusing on funding high priority infrastructure through:

- the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility;
- the \$600 million Northern Australia Roads Programme;
- the \$100 million Northern Australia Beef Roads Programme;
- \$200 million to facilitate greater investment in northern water infrastructure (part of the \$500 million National Water Infrastructure Development Fund);
- \$39.6 million for airstrip upgrades and air services in remote areas;
- \$5 million for analysis of potential northern freight rail projects; and
- \$3.7 million to develop a northern Australia infrastructure pipeline.

Through the Northern Australia Roads Programme the Government is supporting major transport routes across northern Australia by funding high priority road projects essential to the movement of people and freight. In addition, the Beef Roads Programme will provide funding for projects that improve the resilience of cattle supply chains in northern Australia. To meet these challenges, the Government is liaising with the northern jurisdictions to identify priority projects for funding.

Submissions from jurisdictions on the Northern Australia Roads Programme are currently under assessment and successful projects are expected to be announced in early 2016. The Government released a Northern Australia Roads Programme Discussion Paper in December 2015, seeking expressions of interest to bring forward innovative funding and delivery proposals for projects. The expressions of interest period closed on 29 January 2016.

For the Beef Roads Programme, consultation with northern jurisdictions is well progressed. Two stakeholder roundtables were held in Rockhampton and Kununurra in late 2015, with a third to follow in Darwin in early 2016. Collaborating with the CSIRO, the Department is working through the priorities that have been submitted by stakeholders following the roundtables. The Government will shortly be calling for jurisdictions to submit formal project proposals for assessment, with successful Beef Roads projects announced in mid-2016.

Strategic Resolution 49

Gunnedah Shire Council NSW

That the National General Assembly calls upon the Federal Government to implement the recommendations of the FIFO/DIDO report entitled "Cancer of the bush or salvation for our cities? Fly-in, fly-out and drive-in, drive-out workforce practices in Regional Australia" as expeditiously as possible.

Response

On 4 June 2015, the Australian Government released its response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia report, *Cancer of the bush or salvation for our cities? Fly-in, fly-out and drive-in, drive-out workforce practices in Regional Australia*. The recommendations have a broad range of regional implications and a number of areas for action across all tiers of government.

Many of the recommendations relate more closely to areas of state and territory responsibility but the Government agreed to four of the 21 recommendations, while noting 14 others. The Government acknowledges that fly-in, fly-out and drive-in, drive-out is a legitimate practice to ensure access to a reliable workforce for regional employers, however, it comes with an impact on local communities and the Government has taken this into consideration in its response.

The Government is committed to supporting a strong national economy that benefits all Australians, regardless of where they live. This involves working with Australia's regions to pursue and seize opportunities for economic development. As a sign of the Government's ongoing commitment to regional Australia, the Hon Michael McCormack MP, Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister, will be meeting with a diverse range of local community leaders and representatives from Regional Development Australia committees, regional industries and academic institutions. These discussions will provide a direct channel for the Government to hear first-hand community solutions to build a more prosperous future for regional Australia and will provide the opportunity to discuss some of the broader issues fly-in, fly-out and drive-in, drive-out communities face.

Resolution 69

Moonee Valley VIC

That the National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Federal Government to support local governments in implementing a national safety campaign aimed at stopping children being left unattended in cars, including financial support for the strategic roll out of signage across appropriate local, state and federal government owned land.

Proposed Response

Vehicle safety issues for children, although vitally important, do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Australian Government. State and territory governments have statutory responsibility for cases where children are left unattended in vehicles.

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that all Australian children are safe and well. The Government plays a leadership role in relation to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009-2020) (the Framework). Responsibilities outlined under the Framework are centred on reform and improvement to the statutory child protection system.

The Third Action Plan (the Plan) under the Framework was launched on 9 December 2015, by the Hon Christian Porter MP, Minister for Social Services, following national consultation in 2015 and endorsement of the Plan by states and territories. The Plan focuses on three strategies: early intervention; helping young people in out-of-home care to thrive in adulthood; and organisations responding better to children and young people to keep them safe.

Further information can be found on the Department of Social Services' website: www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/protecting-australias-children.