



TREASURER

ALGA MAIL
ITEM No:
DATE RECEIVED: 29.4.16
FILE No:

Ref: MC16-000199

Mayor Troy Pickard
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Mayor Pickard

Thank you for your correspondence concerning motions raised at the 21st National General Assembly of Local Government meeting in Canberra.

You have asked for my assistance with three motions, Federal Funding for Urban Public Transport; Funding the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to establish a cross-jurisdictional working group; and for the Government to develop disincentives to long term vacancies of retail premises in main street shopping strips. Each motion is addressed separately below:

1. Strategic Resolution 30 – Wyndham City Council, Victoria: Federal Funding for Urban Public Transport.

When prioritising transport infrastructure projects for funding, the Australian Government considers projects based on their merits and the cost benefit analysis. The Australian Government has a \$50 billion commitment to improve Australia's road and rail network. This will boost Australia's growth with jobs, improved services, and less congestion on some important urban infrastructure. Projects include new roads in most Australian states and territories, bridge upgrades, a new freight rail link in Western Australia and the Gold Coast light rail.

The \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility will also help develop Australia's north through better road, rail, port and power infrastructure.

2. Resolution 50 – Isaac Regional Council, Queensland: Funding the Australian Bureau of Statistics to establish a cross-jurisdictional working group to look at fly-in, fly-out and drive-in, drive-out workforce practices in Regional Australia.

The Government recognises the need to maintain and continually enhance regional population data to support planning and the delivery of regional infrastructure and services. Through the ABS, the Government has an existing capability in data analysis and research to inform decision making on regional infrastructure and services.

The ABS' official population statistics are managed through its demography program, which provides leadership in the development of proposals to improve population measures to meet client needs. The ABS is aware of the growing demand for high quality service population measures, and is working towards a program of continuous improvement in its data collection methodologies.

In the 2015–16 Budget the Government provided an extra \$234.7 million in funding over five years to enhance the core capacity of the ABS.

3. Resolution 75 – Leichhardt Council, New South Wales: Government to develop disincentives to long term vacancies of retail premises in main street shopping strips in order to assist the rejuvenation of strips affected by the downturns in trade due to the impact of online shopping and other changes.

With regard to retail premises, lease terms are governed by retail tenancy laws administered by the responsible state and territory jurisdictions. You may wish to encourage your members to write to their respective state and territory governments to find out what is being done in this regard.

The Government recognises the important contribution that businesses make to local communities and the economy. This is why the Government has a comprehensive policy for small businesses which will encourage growth, drive employment and promote innovation.

To assist small businesses with a turnover of under \$2 million, the Government has lowered the company tax rate for small companies by 1.5 percentage points, provided a 5 per cent tax discount for small unincorporated businesses and allowed immediate deductibility on every asset costing less than \$20,000 until the end of June 2017. The Government has also announced reforms which will result in reduced compliance costs of \$4.5 billion for business, community organisations and individuals, abolished the Carbon Tax, simplified the superannuation system, and reduced the taxation reporting requirements for small business. By cutting compliance costs, small businesses will have more time and resources to focus on developing their business and doing what they do best: creating wealth and employment.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Morrison', written in a cursive style.

The Hon Scott Morrison MP

21 / 4 / 2016