



AUSTRALIAN  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION

**27<sup>th</sup>**

**National  
General  
Assembly**

**20 – 23 June 2021**

**CANBERRA**

**WORKING TOGETHER  
FOR OUR COMMUNITIES**

**RESOLUTIONS**

### **1 City of Newcastle, NSW**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly:

1. Notes with disappointment that Local Government remains unrepresented on the National Cabinet and requests that First Ministers review the decision to exclude Local Government from the national decision-making table;
2. Recognise the importance of having local government representation on National Cabinet and the value of partnerships with councils in achieving the objectives of the National Cabinet and the national reform agenda; and
3. Includes a representative from the Australian Local Government Association on the National Cabinet, to ensure local government's interests are strongly represented at the national level.

### **2 South Burnett Regional Council, QLD and Shellharbour Council, NSW - Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to restore funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

### **3 Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council, NSW**

**Withdrawn**

The National General Assembly calls on the federal government to undertake a review of the current financial distribution arrangement of the Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) with the purpose of developing a formula which will redistribute the funds and increase the amount currently apportioned to regional and rural local government areas across the nation for a fairer share.

### **3 Forbes Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to not vary the financial distribution of Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) until the FAGs level is increased to 1% of Commonwealth tax revenue.

### **4 Maroondah City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly calls upon the Federal Government to provide a one-off increase in the amount of Financial Assistance Grants made to Local Government for the 2021/22 year in recognition of the substantial costs incurred and revenue losses for all Councils as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial impacts of the resultant Federal, State and Territory Government restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of the disease.

### **5 Tenterfield Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to provide grant funding to Regional and Rural Councils in advance and not in arrears so as to avoid impacting unfavourably on such Councils' cash flow.

## **6 Frankston City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to:

- Increase in real terms its financial assistance to local government to ensure that Councils can continue to provide the necessary financial support to local businesses and the community for its economic recovery in the face of the continuing impacts of COVID-19; and
- Reverse its decision to exclude employees of subsidiary organisations to local government from any future JobKeeper payment support that may be necessary for businesses significantly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19).

## **7 Brimbank Shire Council, VIC**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to partner with respective State and Territory Governments, as well as Local Government Areas (LGAs), to establish and administer dedicated Jobs and Skills Partnerships for LGAs, to help create local job pathways, align and improve employment, skill, and learning outcomes for local communities across Australia in response to COVID-19. Local Jobs and Skills Partnership would be responsible for the review, coordination and monitoring of Federal, State and local government efforts and resources, including social services, libraries and neighbourhood houses, right through to schools, TAFE, and higher education; as to ensure meaningful pathways are identified and created to employment on local infrastructure projects, as well as with relevant industries that require labour and will provide future job opportunities across respective regions.

## **7A Wyndham City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to partner with State and Territory Governments and Local Governments, to roll out nationally a locally coordinated place-based employment services program for disadvantaged job seekers under the New Employment Services Model (NESM), including in particular support for refugees and humanitarian entrants who require Enhanced Services delivered through employment services providers under the NESM.

These national enhanced employment services are proposed to build on the recent Regional Employment Trials, administered by the Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment, which have shown success in using a place-based approach to draw on local stakeholder expertise in developing employment projects, coordinated by local government.

## **8 City of Melbourne, VIC**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a funding program directed through local government to support those in sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In seeking support, the NGA advises that the new funding program should:

1. Be separate to, and provide funding above and beyond that offered by, Financial Assistance Grants.
2. Require local government to directly employ local people in the arts, entertainment and events industries, noting these are heavily impacted industries that have been least supported by the JobKeeper program due to a high instance of casual and contract labour, and which have been overlooked by significant stimulus funding from the Commonwealth Government.
3. Recognise the ability of local government to expend stimulus funding efficiently and fairly.
4. Place a focus on the importance of creative practitioners in developing solutions in local communities as part of economic recovery and community development.

#### **9 Tenterfield Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to either cease the practice of expecting Council co-contributions when applying for Federal Government Grants or allow Council's in-kind contributions to be eligible as the co-contribution from Councils.

#### **10 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to introduce funding opportunities for regional airports to offset reductions in income due to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure regional communities are not further disadvantaged.

#### **11 Albury City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on Australian, State and Territory Governments to:

- harmonise legislation, regulation, policies and practices to mitigate the financial and social impacts of anomalies on border communities across the nation, and
- adopt a national approach to management of the COVID-19 pandemic to eliminate the closure of State and Territory borders.

#### **12 Bendigo City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to address the economic hardship people in rural and regional areas are experiencing due to the unique combined impacts of COVID-19, unprecedented bushfires, long running drought and/or flooding by providing additional support for recovery.

That this relief include:

- a. Initiatives targeting the tourism and creative industries
- b. an evaluation of and response to the youth and gender impacts of COVID-19
- c. initiatives that will boost jobs and long-term community resilience to climate
- d. restoration of funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

### **13 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW**

**Lost**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish a permanent Disaster Levy as an income tax levy, to establish a funding base to empower Local Government to support our communities with resilience and disaster recovery.

### **14 Bellingen Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to release the \$4 billion in unallocated Emergency Response Funds to the 537 State and Territory Local Government Councils across the nation to increase local community capacity to implement sustainable and effective community disaster recovery, preparedness and resilience initiatives.

### **15 Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to audit, report on, and hasten financial relief to those who have applied for bushfire relief.

### **16 Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly of Local Government call on the Commonwealth and states and Territory Governments to ensure that ALGA, State Associations and local Councils are appropriately represented on advisory groups and projects linked to the new National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency being established by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to ensure that both local government local and community voices are heard in the important work that will be led by this agency.

### **17 Nillumbik Shire Council, VIC**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work closely with state and local government to develop appropriate implementation frameworks and make available greater funding – either through the extension of its Smart Cities and Suburbs program or a new initiative, to enable local governments and their

communities to implement the latest networking and monitoring technology in their efforts to improve bushfire preparedness and climate resilience.

**18 Balonne Shire Council, QLD**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to include a 'pandemic' under the definition of an 'eligible disaster' under the Disaster Recover Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Guidelines to enable local government costs to be claimed in line with other 'disaster' events.

**19 Lake Macquarie City, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide funding and resources for circular economy capability building and support for the development of Circular Economy Action Plans for local government.

**20 Penrith City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on Australian Government to fund and invite industry and local government representatives to establish a National Waste and Resource Recovery Working Group to develop clear standards and guidelines for the management, storage, and collection of resource recovery material from all development types (residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use).

**21 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly expresses its support for Federal Government investment in a jobs-rich conservation and land management stimulus package as part of the economic response to COVID-19.

**22 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to provide sector wide non-competitive grants for Local Government to implement Urban Forest Strategies and landscape restoration projects.

**23 Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish a mechanism to enable the provision of funding and resources to local governments in order for them to review the Environmental Impact Statements of Major Projects assessed in accordance with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

**24 Mitcham Council, SA**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to investigate the environmental impacts of artificial turf and more environmentally appropriate alternatives for sporting surfaces.

**25 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to:

- formally recognise we are in a state of climate emergency;
- appoint a Minister for Climate Change/Emergency to champion climate change efforts across the country
- establish a National Climate Change Taskforce to enable a whole-of-government approach to climate action
- commit to actively work with Local Government, industry and communities to:
- reduce waste production,
- set a zero emissions target
- support the development of renewable energy industries
- provide incentives to all sectors to change to more efficient technologies
- significantly increase urban vegetation cover and rehabilitate degraded rural environments
- increase support for households to access energy efficient demands

**26. Yarra City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to establish a funding stream for local governments to support their efforts in climate adaptation and mitigation in their local communities.

**27 Paroo Shire Council, QLD**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to develop a revised Carbon Farming Initiative (Program) that is able to adapt to local community circumstances to maximise its intended benefits and minimise any cumulative and unintended negative consequences.

**28 Randwick City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Australian Government to:

Support a just transition to an environmentally and socially sustainable economy and society by:

- a. upholding the Sovereignty demands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people expressing Inherent Custodial Rights to protect land, water, sky, culture and community;
- b. transitioning to net zero emissions by 2050;
- c. developing policies across the economic, environmental, social, education/training and labour portfolios needed to provide an enabling environment for enterprises, workers, investors and consumers to drive the transition towards an environmentally sustainable and inclusive economy and society; and
- d. integrating provisions for a just transition into national plans and policies for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and national environmental and climate change action plans.

### **29 Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider a range of alternate water sources when determining the eligibility of projects under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund grants scheme in order to ensure water security for communities and industry across Australia.

### **30 Mildura Rural City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government for a review on how low the environmental water allocation became and how we move to rectify this oversight.

### **31 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal and State Governments to provide a funding stream aimed to tackle drought mitigation projects that will also provide positive outcomes for firefighting purposes and managing stock routes.

### **32 Leeton Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to protect national food security and the sustainability of regional irrigation communities by:

- acknowledging irrigation communities were purposefully built by governments to feed and drought-proof the nation
- acknowledging the unintended adverse impacts on regional communities of certain water policy decisions and the operation of water trading markets
- acknowledging that the nation's primary producers are adept at using water efficiently and responsibly
- providing enhanced water access for general security water holders in regional communities who depend on the availability of this water for their livelihoods

- ensuring decisions foster diversity in agriculture and value adding industries
- reviewing and adjusting timelines for the completion of Murray-Darling Basin projects and plans such as the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Measures (SDLAM) Projects and Water Sharing Plans.

### **33 Melbourne City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly seeks the express support of the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction and Treasurer for new resources direct to regional groupings of Councils to implement programs that accelerate renewable energy procurement and energy efficiency upgrade projects, especially those that bring Councils, businesses and other organisations together to collectively work towards achieving zero carbon emissions.

### **34 Town of Gawler Council, SA**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to amend the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) Framework to establish a legal definition of what is required to buy renewable electricity via the electricity grid and claim 100% renewable electricity use and zero emissions. This will establish market-based accounting for renewable electricity, create a single nationally consistent method that applies to electricity and renewable electricity consumption and prevent double counting for all customers including for councils, seeking legally assured, clearly defined and fairly priced renewable electricity.

### **35 South Burnett Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to consider a consistent National Energy Policy approach and legislation that ensures responsible investment in renewable energy projects.

### **36 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide employment opportunities nationwide to support Cultural Burning (Indigenous fire management) as a resilience strategy. This would take the form of a core jobs program, amalgamated with conservation management.

### **37 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW**

**Lost**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to enact legislation to:

1. Exempt hazard reduction burns and the construction of APZs (asset protection zones) from any limitations within Acts or Regulations which restrict any authorised authority from doing so.

2. Repeal or create an easement over any section of a National Park where part of the Park falls within a 200m APZ and vest the management of that land in the local Council.
3. Require private land holders (including Aboriginal Land) to create and maintain a parkland-like cleared area of 200m to act as an APZ at the interface with any urban development requiring an APZ.
4. Require any Government Authority who manages forested areas to properly maintain and improve the construction of fire trails.
5. Consider the construction strategic fire breaks though forested areas including National Parks of a similar width to a major electricity easement.

### **38 Randwick City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Australian Government to:

- 1) acknowledge that Local Government across Australia continue to demonstrate strong leadership in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by undertaking a range of actions across the nation such as:
  - a) supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart which calls on the Australian people to walk with First Nations in a people's movement for Voice, Treaty, Truth.
  - b) by endorsing the Uluru Statement and sharing this support by publicly displaying the Uluru Statement and putting up posters in prominent locations throughout local council areas; and
  - c) encouraging all Councils to register support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart on the website <https://www.1voiceuluru.org/>
- 2) calls on the Australian Government to support Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the key principles of the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart'.

### **39 Darebin City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly call for the establishment of an appropriate advisory structure and/or representative voice to Local Government comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across Australia to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a say about Councils' decisions that affect them and to guide Councils' broader work relating to First Nations peoples, truth telling, sovereignty, treaty-making and addressing systemic racism.

### **40 East Arnhem Regional Council, NT**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly (NGA) calls on the Federal, State and Territory Governments to commit to nationally consistent recognition of Indigenous Local Government Councils as an Aboriginal controlled entity across Australia at all levels

of Government. Indigenous Local Government Council being a Local Government Council with a majority representation of both Elected Officials and Constituency of Indigenous Australians.

#### **41 Darwin City Council, NT**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly

- a) Calls on Australian Local Government Association, as the lead member and advocacy body for Local Government in Australia to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan for the Australian Local Government Association.
- b) Calls on the Australian Government to fund a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Safety Training Program for all Local Government Elected Members and Council Staff as an act of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.

#### **42 Newcastle City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Commonwealth Government to:

1. Endorse the 'Racism Not Welcome' campaign, headed up by former Socceroos Captain, SBS commentator and human rights campaigner, Craig Foster, at the national level, as a symbol of Australia's commitment to multiculturalism, inclusivity, and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
2. Partner with peak national bodies, including the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, the Refugee Council of Australia, and the Inner West Multicultural Network, to implement the 'Racism Not Welcome' campaign on a national level.

#### **43 Inner West Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on all Councils:

1. To note that the #RacismNotWelcome campaign was created by the Inner West Multicultural Network (IWMN) as a grassroots anti-racism campaign for local Councils and communities to create safe places;
2. To endorse the #RacismNotWelcome campaign; and
3. To write to the Prime Minister and relevant Minister/s to:
  - a. Express grave concern at the rise of racism in Australia;
  - b. Request funding be made available to Councils to support the rollout of the #RacismNotWelcome campaign.

#### **44 Isaac Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to urgently conduct an Inquiry and engage rural communities to assess the effectiveness of the 2019 Stronger Rural Health Strategy, and in particular, to identify any anomalies in the strategy that are symptomatic of the diversity of rural Australia and its health.

#### **45 Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to investigate and explore a partnership between local government and Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation to ensure young people in rural, remote, isolated and public transport-deprived areas gain access to appropriate and relevant youth mental health services.

#### **46 Glen Innes Severn Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly (NGA) calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Formulate a Liveability Plan for Regional Australia and to take immediate action to manage and ultimately eliminate the Mental Health issues currently affecting young people living in Regional Australia.
2. Make a lasting and meaningful commitment to provide sustained financial support to proven intervention services or directly to Councils to assist in local programs or engage external services such as Youth In-search.

The Liveability Plan should urgently address the following significant issues, which are being felt so extensively throughout Regional Australia:

- Healthcare;
- Mental Health;
- Connectivity;
- Housing Availability;
- Traineeships and Apprenticeships for youth.
- The expansion and assistance with Renewable Energy projects, which will inject significant employment into Regional Australia.

#### **47 Blacktown City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to ensure that:

1. local government receives an appropriate and equitable share of Federal arts and cultural funding
2. local councils are recognised as arts organisations and made eligible to apply for all funding opportunities.

To support this campaign, the National General urges councils across Australia to adapt the ALGA arts and culture position statement and assist with joint advocacy.

**48 Penrith City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to continue to invest in arts and culture stimulus programs (including capital investments) to ensure this sector of the economy can rebuild and that investments reach local communities.

**49 Broken Hill City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

That the Federal Government provides funding for the development of state and territory wide Museum Strategies and provide sufficient resources to ensure cultural heritage led vibrancy, collection care and local storytelling initiatives are supported, developed and maintained for communities throughout the nation.

**50 Leeton Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to improve the welfare of migrants and resolve the labour shortages affecting businesses and industries in rural and regional Australia by:

1. Revising the visa regime to grant work rights to all bridging visa holders
2. Granting amnesty to undocumented workers, specifically undocumented farm workers.

**51 Tweed Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to provide a significant and transformational funding stream for regenerative landscape management as an economic stimulus and job creator, that is easily accessible for rural landholders (including consideration of US and EU models of farm payments) to maintain and restore rural lands and provide the large scale change that is required to mitigate the increasing natural disasters that Australia is experiencing with Climate Change.

**52 Yarra City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That this Assembly resolves that:

- a) the Federal Government's revised rate of the Jobseeker payment of \$44 per day is considered inadequate and will result in millions of Australian citizens being unnecessarily trapped in poverty as after 25 years with no increase to the incomes of unemployed Australians an increase of just \$3.57 per day above the previous rate of the Newstart payment is insufficient;

- b) it supports the demands from the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) “Raise the Rate for Good” campaign for:
  - I. an increase to the base rate of JobSeeker Payment by at least \$25 a day, and ensure everyone receives at least \$65 a day;
  - II. ongoing indexation of payments in line with wage movements at least twice per year; and
  - III. establishment of a Social Security Commission to advise the Parliament on the ongoing adequacy of income support payments; and
- c) member Councils be encouraged to register as Organisational Supporters of the ACOSS “Raise the Rate for Good” campaign

**53 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to fund a permanent and ongoing increase to the JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance to above the poverty line.

**54 Brimbank City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to retain and expand the JobKeeper and JobSeeker Programs, to support ongoing response and recovery efforts to the COVID-19 Pandemic throughout local communities for at least the duration of 2021.

**55 Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide support for the concept of a universal entitlement to aged care that recognises the preference of many community members to stay in their own home and in their own regions. This support should ensure an equitable standard of aged care support across the nation.

**56 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to collaboratively develop relevant models of aged care for rural and remote areas.

**57 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to have the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratios Disclosure) Bill 2019 re-presented & brought into legislation.

**58 City of Boroondara, VIC**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to maintain the current volunteer management activity (VMA) funding arrangements for all volunteer support agencies and to increase the allocation in the next Federal Budget, as volunteering is key to keeping people feeling connected and supplied with essential services and critical support, particularly vulnerable, isolated and disengaged residents, at a time of high unemployment.

**59 Liverpool City Council, NSW**

**Lost**

That the National General Assembly call on the Federal Government for a national consultation process involving all levels of government, that will provide the opportunity to re-assess and implement new planning controls that will ensure the delivery of future Pandemic Safe Housing and Development.

**60 Brimbank City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to invest in social and affordable housing, working in partnership with state, territory and local governments to meet local demand and deliver post-pandemic economic stimulus.

**61 Darebin City Council, VIC, Fremantle City Council, WA, Mount Isa City Council, QLD, Randwick City Council, NSW, City of West Torrens, SA** **Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on The Australian Government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

**62 Orange City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to take action to make local communities and workplaces safer and more inclusive for women, including by:

- fully responding to the 55 recommendations in the Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect@Work report of the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces 2020
- lifting public funding for the prevention of gendered violence to world's best practice
- working with State and Territory Governments to introduce legislation to promote gender equality and require gender equity audits of government practices at all levels of government.

**63 Isaac Regional Council, QLD****Carried**

That this National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Australian Government to urgently implement Recommendations 1 and 2 of The Senate Economics Reference Committee December 2020 Final Report on the Inquiry into the indicators of, and impact of, regional inequality in Australia.

Recommendation 1 recommends the Australian Government fundamentally re-examine its regional infrastructure spending plan and make an expanded infrastructure programme the basis for its stimulus plan for Australia's economic recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Recommendation 2 recommends, in order to achieve the most appropriate response for regional investment, the Australian Government undertake a series of round table consultations with:

- Commonwealth departments and agencies;
- State and local governments;
- Regional associations; and
- Community organisations.

**64 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW****Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to undertake a nationwide educative project on cybersecurity, in particular to help protect vulnerable members of our community against online fraud.

**65 Orange City Council, NSW****Carried**

The National General Assembly recognises the significant value to Australian society of regional TV news bulletins; and calls on the Australian Government to review and implement changes to relevant legislation to ensure commercial regional broadcasters are required to produce significant local bulletins.

**66 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW****Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a formal transparent framework of contacts for Local Government to liaise effectively with Federal Government partners.

**67 Broken Hill City Council, NSW****Carried**

That the Federal Government provides funding to financially support local councils in the restoration and remediation of local cemeteries that have been severely damaged from climatic conditions and drought.

**68 Tenterfield Shire Council, NSW****Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide grant funding to assist Councils deal with the costs incurred in correcting historical errors in mapping of actual roads so that ratepayers do not have to meet these costs.

**69 Newcastle City Council, NSW****Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Note that in some jurisdictions, Councillors, Mayors and Lord Mayors are not entitled to the Superannuation Guarantee Contribution, despite Councillors being paid the appropriate superannuation entitlements in other jurisdictions;
2. Note that this sets a poor community standard and sends the wrong message to the community, given that superannuation should be a universal system to support all workers in Australia; and
3. Rationalise the Superannuation system for elected representatives from the local government level and ensure that all Councillors across Australia receive the Superannuation Guarantee Contribution.

**70 Litchfield Council, NT****Carried**

The National Assembly calls on the Commonwealth Government to facilitate the harmonisation of Long Service Leave (LSL) laws in Australia which would provide all States and Territories with a consistent set of LSL laws. This regulatory inconsistency should be addressed through an intergovernmental agreement vis-a-vis Work Health and Safety laws, to enable governments from each State and Territory and the Commonwealth to formally commit to the harmonisation of LSL laws. The intention is to harmonise these laws (including the Regulations that underpin them) to deliver the same LSL entitlements to all Australians.

**71 Leeton Shire Council, NSW****Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to hold a referendum to amend the Constitution to recognise local government as an important, legitimate and essential element in Australia's system of government.

**72 Mildura Rural City Council, VIC****Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to both increase Financial Assistance Grants overall, and address the rural and metropolitan rates divide that results in an imbalance in the capacity of rural councils to service communities and rural ratepayers to service rates.

Amendment by City of Melbourne agreed.

**73 Mitchell Shire Council, VIC****Carried**

That the National General Assembly advocate to the Federal Government, and in particular the Minister for Local Government, for an increase in the Financial Assistance Grants to support local governments to deliver a range of services including roads maintenance.

**74 Wakefield Regional Council, SA****Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with state/territory Local Government Grants Commissions across Australia, to ensure the allocation of federal road funding is distributed to local governments in accordance with the National Principles of horizontal equalisation as required by the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

**75 Liverpool City Council, NSW****Carried**

The National General Assembly request that the Federal Government investigate a forward funding acquisition scheme that will enable local governments to provide infrastructure supporting the development of national assets; and that the investigation also consider funding opportunities through a value capture process or increased funds generated in the existing tax regime due to higher land values and transaction volumes associated with areas of major infrastructure delivery.

**76 Penrith City Council, NSW****Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to invest in nation building projects where it can be established, they will facilitate better road and transport connections between cities and with regions around Australia. The criteria for these projects should be based on the economic opportunities they create for freight and passenger movement, migration, service provision and business support, as these are known to contribute best to our national productivity. This motion has been developed in collaboration with the Lachlan Shire Council and will be submitted jointly.

**77 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD****Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a centrally funded aviation security mechanism that includes all airports providing domestic flights.

**78 Broken Hill City Council, NSW****Carried**

That the Federal Government ensures an adequate provision of charging points for electric vehicles in regional areas in order that regional areas are not deprived of the opportunity to purchase vehicles and also to ensure that people living in metropolitan areas can travel to regional and remote areas. Once the use of electric vehicles

gains momentum, regional Australia should not miss out on tourism due to not having adequate charging bays.

**79 Mitchell Shire Council, VIC**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly call on the Federal and State Government to:

- Develop a clear long-term investment pathway for major social infrastructure and accompanying health, community and educational services in outer urban growth areas
- Call for an equitable and consistent allocation of funding announcements that focuses on emerging communities in outer urban growth areas
- Prioritise the planning and early funded delivery of community services and infrastructure in emerging communities, in order to avoid the costly, and often inadequate, retrofitting of emerging communities.

**80 Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly urges the Environment Minister to better monitor and enforce relevant company membership of the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.

**81 Shellharbour Council, NSW**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly of Local Government call on the Federal Government and Opposition to commit to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement.

**82 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) to take the lead in maintaining and providing assets for flood modelling / forecasting purposes in regional areas.

**83 South Burnett Regional Council, QLD**

**Carried**

That this National Assembly calls on the Federal Government to fund ABC transmission black spot sites to ensure coverage for all communities in the event of Natural Disaster.

**84 Parkes Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to initiate a "Natural Disaster Preventative Measures Fund" to provide financial assistance to Local Government for planning mitigation strategies for extreme natural disaster events.

**85 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW****Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to accept and implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission on National Natural Disasters pertaining to an enhanced role for the Commonwealth in coordinating the established levels of state, territory and local council response, and affording Commonwealth assistance as requested by established local and state authorities. This will ensure a national response to emergencies that will facilitate our communities' resilience following disasters.

**86 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD****Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the federal government to commit increased funding to proportionately enhance regional connectivity to the digital economy.

**87 Tamworth Regional Council, NSW****Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to investigate the failings of the National Broadband Network in rural and regional Australia and the exorbitant cost of connection for some businesses and residents.

**88 Hobart City Council, TAS****Carried**

The National General Assembly calls upon the Australian Government to ensure a fair balance is made between the requirements of telecommunications carriers to roll out 5G technology and the protection of public spaces from undesirable infrastructure proliferation as has occurred in other jurisdictions.

**89 Cowra Shire Council, NSW****Carried**

That this National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Federal Government to institute discussions with all telecommunications providers, as a matter of priority, with a view to rapidly bringing services in regional and rural areas of Australia up to standards comparable with those in metropolitan areas.

**90 Tamworth Regional Council, NSW****Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to ensure the current review of the National Medical Workforce Strategy, and in particular how a "District of Workforce Shortage" is determined when allocating Medicare Provider Numbers, provides flexibility and opportunities for Medical Practitioners and Specialists to relocate to regional and rural communities so that they are not disadvantaged in the delivery of adequate and essential medical services.

**91 Leeton Shire Council, NSW****Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to dedicate funds to increase drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation options in rural and regional areas as a matter of priority.

**92 Parkes Shire Council, NSW****Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the State and Federal Governments to invest further in social and affordable housing.

**93 Moreland City Council, VIC****Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to take action to strengthen the delivery of social and affordable housing across Australia by:

- Matching the direct funding being put forward by the States and Territories in Australia which are investing in social and affordable housing.
- Preparing a National Housing Strategy.

**94 Darebin City Council, VIC****Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to take action to strengthen the delivery of social and affordable housing across Australia by:

- Preparing a National Housing Strategy
- The National Housing Strategy to encourage nationally consistent approaches to State and Territory Planning legislation to facilitate Inclusionary Zoning for Affordable Housing, as a tool that can be utilised by Governments and metropolitan

and growth Councils (and any Councils where they so choose) to require affordable housing contributions as part of private development.

**95 Byron Shire Council, NSW****Carried**

The National General Assembly asks that all levels of government work together to investigate ways of making the delivery of affordable and accessible housing easier. We ask that the Federal Government consider:

- a) investing more money into social housing,
- b) reviewing the impact of current tax arrangements like negative gearing on housing affordability,
- c) reviewing the effectiveness of rental assistance in its current form,
- d) increasing the grant percentage of the National Housing and Infrastructure Finance Corporation finance from 20% to 50% to local councils,

- e) implement a national RAPID program, supported by state and local governments to address homelessness,
- f) where appropriate, donating crown land to be used for the provision of social and affordable housing,
- g) changing policy and regulatory settings to better support and fund councils in addressing the affordable and accessible housing crisis in the Northern Rivers Region and other areas throughout the country. This could include enabling controls on existing housing that is kept empty for visitor accommodation, for example in Byron Shire, where approximately half the residential rental stock, over 3,500 properties, are listed, 80% whole houses and most are available year round for short term holiday letting,
- h) exploring supporting councils to directly facilitate development through planning, the provision of land and financial levels such as subsidies.

**96 Liverpool City Council, NSW**

**Carried**

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to recommit to genuine partnership between three levels of Government in the City Deal model, and commit resources to progress stalled negotiations; reconcile real progress against planned outcomes such as in the Western Sydney City Deal; and leverage the learnings from the current City Deals to inform improved and replicable models for future Deals.

**97 Northern Midlands Council, TAS**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider the implementation of additional Regional Deals throughout the country.

**98 Salisbury City Council, SA**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to provide funding support to Councils across Australia for conducting citizenship ceremonies that have become a significant cost burden to local communities for undertaking a role on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia.

**99 Darebin City Council, VIC**

**Carried**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Local Government Association to establish an advisory structure or mechanism formed with people with expertise from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to inform its work relating to cultural diversity and inclusion and have a say about decisions that affect them and guide Councils' broader work relating to multicultural communities.

**100 Wattle Range Council, SA**

**Lost**

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Taxation Office to consider introducing a unique tax-free threshold for elected member allowances of \$50,000.

**101 City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW**

**Carried**

That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to reverse its 2014/15 decision to withdraw funding to pensioners and reinstate the 5% contribution towards the pensioner rate rebate.

**102 Leeton Shire Council, NSW**

**Carried**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to develop and implement a weed management plan to protect agricultural land from incursions of well-established weeds such as Fleabane (*Conyza* spp.) and Silverleaf Nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*) in order to maintain the productivity of agricultural land and ensure the sustainability of regional communities by acknowledging that:

- Some well-established weeds are resistant to standard registered herbicides including Glyphosate
- Limited state and federal funding is provided for the control of such weeds under the Biosecurity Act 2015 through the General Biosecurity Duty
- the NSW Government Weed Action plan is focused on new and emerging weed varieties. Many weeds do not meet this criterion and therefore attract no State or Federal funding for their management.



# PAUL FLETCHER MP

Federal Member for Bradfield  
Minister for Communications,  
Urban Infrastructure,  
Cities & the Arts

MC21-007316

Cr Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
alga.ea@alga.asn.au

Dear Cr <sup>Linda</sup> Scott

Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2021 concerning resolutions relevant to my portfolio from your recent National General Assembly. I am sorry it has taken me so long to respond.

I note you have also written to the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development; Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie MP, Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience and Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education; and the Hon Kevin Hogan MP, Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Local Government. They have responded separately about the motions relating to their portfolios.

The last two years have certainly tested the ingenuity and solidarity of Australians, as we have together faced drought, bushfires, floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Local governments have shown true leadership and determination, assisting their communities and the economy when disasters hit.

Having seen the devastation from the 2019-20 bushfires first-hand on my visit to the South Coast in January 2020, I wanted to move quickly to get equipment in place before another natural disaster occurs. As a result, I announced the \$37.1 million Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) program. It includes a \$7 million program for the deployment of satellite facilities at rural fire service depots and evacuation centres right across Australia, which can be used in emergencies to maintain connectivity.

I extend my thanks to local governments, and to the Australian Local Government Association, for your continuing service to the sector.

Thank you for bringing your resolutions to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Fletcher', written in a cursive style.

Paul Fletcher

31/10/2021

Enc.

## **Response to motions**

### ***Motion 8***

*That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a funding program directed through local government to support those in sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In seeking support, the NGA advises that the new funding program should:*

- 1. Be separate to, and provide funding above and beyond that offered by, Financial Assistance Grants.*
- 2. Require local government to directly employ local people in the arts, entertainment, and events industries, noting these are heavily impacted industries that have been least supported by the JobKeeper program due to a high instance of casual and contract labour, and which have been overlooked by significant stimulus funding from the Commonwealth Government.*
- 3. Recognise the ability of local government to expend stimulus funding efficiently and fairly.*
- 4. Place a focus on the importance of creative practitioners in developing solutions in local communities as part of economic recovery and community development.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by City of Melbourne*

### **Response**

The Australian Government provided more than \$10 billion in wage and cash flow support to the country's creative and cultural sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to analysis released by the Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research (BCARR). The analysis estimates that employees and businesses in cultural and creative sectors received \$10.7 billion from the Government to support their operations, including \$8 billion in JobKeeper payments between April and December 2020, and \$2.7 billion in Boosting Cash Flow for Employers payments to early February 2021.

### ***Motion 17***

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work closely with state and local government to develop appropriate implementation frameworks and make available greater funding – either through the extension of its Smart Cities and Suburbs program or a new initiative, to enable local governments and their communities to implement the latest networking and monitoring technology in their efforts to improve bushfire preparedness and climate resilience.*

*This motion was moved by Nillumbik Shire Council*

### **Response**

The Smart Cities and Suburbs Program round 1 and round 2 projects have all been completed. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications is assessing the outcomes of the projects.

**Motion 47**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to ensure that:*

- 1. local government receives an appropriate and equitable share of Federal arts and cultural funding*
- 2. local councils are recognised as arts organisations and made eligible to apply for all funding opportunities.*

*To support this campaign, the NGA urges councils across Australia to adapt the ALGA arts and culture position statement and assist with joint advocacy.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Blacktown City Council*

**Response**

The Australian Government recognises the strong contribution that local councils make to the arts and culture and will continue to enable local councils to be considered for program grant funding as appropriate. Arts and cultural funding supports artists and arts organisations across Australia, including through a number of programs designed to support regional and remote communities. This support complements investments by state and local governments to strengthen the arts and culture.

**Motion 48**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to continue to invest in arts and culture stimulus programs (including capital investments) to ensure this sector of the economy can rebuild and that investments reach local communities.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Penrith City Council*

**Response**

The Australian Government will continue to invest in arts and culture stimulus programs to help rebuild the economy. In 2021-22, the Australian Government is investing over \$1 billion in support through the arts portfolio.

**Motion 48.1**

*That this National General Assembly call on the State Government/Federal Government to sponsor, promote and support visual and public art projects in local government areas, across Australia, through a public funding or grants opportunities that highlight the impacts and challenges of climate change as it is now affecting communities at a local level.*

*This motion was moved by Maribyrnong City Council*

**Response**

While funding for public art projects is generally provided at the local level, the Australian Government will continue to support artists and arts organisations that respond to the issues affecting local communities. Cultural infrastructure projects are also supported through the Building Better Regions Fund.

**Motion 49**

*That the Federal Government provides funding for the development of state and territory wide Museum Strategies and provides sufficient resources to ensure cultural heritage led vibrancy, collection care and local storytelling initiatives are supported, developed, and maintained for communities throughout the nation.*

*This motion was moved by Broken Hill City Council*

**Response**

As the motion is requesting the development of state and territory strategies, this matter falls within the responsibility of the states and territories.

**Motion 64**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to undertake a nationwide educative project on cybersecurity, in particular to help protect vulnerable members of our community against online fraud.*

*This motion was moved by Shoalhaven City Council*

**Response**

Through Australia's Cyber Security Strategy 2020:

- the Australian Government is progressing a \$4.9 million national cyber security awareness raising campaign to encourage Australians, particularly vulnerable members of the community, to protect themselves against cyber security threats such as online fraud. The campaign will be designed to complement other government messaging, such as those being conducted by the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC), and encourages people to visit [www.cyber.gov.au](http://www.cyber.gov.au) as a one-stop shop on cyber security information.
- The ACSC is providing online cyber security training for older Australians, families and small to medium enterprises.
- \$6.1 million has been provided to IDCARE to bolster support services for victims of identity and cybercrime, such as online fraud.

**Motion 65**

*The National General Assembly recognises the significant value to Australian society of regional TV news bulletins; and calls on the Australian Government to review and implement changes to relevant legislation to ensure commercial regional broadcasters are required to produce significant local bulletins.*

*(Motion also sent to Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Orange City Council*

## **Response**

### *Public Interest News Gathering Program*

The Australian Government recognises the importance to local communities of a strong regional news sector. In 2020, the Government provided \$70 million in funding to 108 regional broadcasters and publishers (including the Australian Associated Press) under the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program. Of the total funding, five regional commercial television broadcasters shared in \$20 million. The objective of the PING Program is to support regional broadcasters and publishers to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional communities.

### *Media Reform Green Paper*

In November 2020, the Australian Government released the Media Reform Green Paper setting out proposed reforms to support the media industry and enhance the range and quality of services available to Australians. The proposals in the paper would provide free-to-air television broadcasters with the choice to transition to a lower-cost operating model, and enable regional broadcasters to seek assistance in covering the costs of regional news services through a Public Interest News Gathering Trust.

The Australian Government committed to consulting with industry on each of these proposals, and the pathway toward a modernised television regulatory framework. That consultation process is underway, and has brought into focus critical questions for the free-to-air television sector about the operating models and broadcasting technologies that would best deliver television services into the future. The Australian Government will continue working closely with the sector to support any transition, deliver fit-for-purpose regulation that reflects the diverse media landscape, and safeguard Australians' access to quality local news.

### ***Motion 83***

*That this National Assembly calls on the Federal Government to fund ABC transmission black spot sites to ensure coverage for all communities in the event of Natural Disaster.*

*(Motion also sent to Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie MP)  
This motion was moved by South Burnett Regional Council*

## **Response**

### *ABC services*

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) plays a principal role in the delivery of timely, accurate and relevant information during fires, floods and other natural disasters or emergencies utilising its extensive radio and television networks and online services. As the national broadcaster, the ABC maintains close relationships with Emergency Management Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology, state emergency agencies and the Federal Attorney General's Department.

The ABC Local Radio network reaches over 99 per cent of the Australian population and is the organisation's primary platform for emergency broadcasts. This network is augmented by the provision of emergency information to digital television viewers via ABC1 and ABC News 24, as well as online audiences using ABC websites and social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

#### *Royal Commission into National Natural Disasters*

The report of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disasters (30 October 2020) acknowledged the important role played by broadcast media, including the ABC and community radio in their coverage of emergency warnings and information in the 2019-20 bushfire season.

In its appearance before the Royal Commission, the ABC said that while the *Australian Broadcast Corporation Act 1983* and the ABC Charter do not require the organisation to assume an official role in emergency broadcasting, it considered this role to be 'central to the ABC's operations and have the highest priority among its activities' (page 307 of the report refers).

During the 2019-20 bushfire season, the ABC noted it had significant coverage and provided emergency warnings to over 950 natural hazardous events. When telecommunications towers were affected, it relied on its radio services for broad coverage (the ABC AM network reaches over 99 per cent of the population). Overall the ABC noted a significant increase in the public use of its services across all platforms during this bushfire season.

#### **Motion 87**

*That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to investigate the failings of the National Broadband Network in rural and regional Australia and the exorbitant cost of connection for some businesses and residents.*

*(Motion also sent to Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Tamworth City Council*

#### **Response**

NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) has rolled out the network using the technology best suited to each area of Australia. This includes the use of fixed wireless and satellite to provide services in locations that are technically and financially challenging to serve due to low population densities and the topography of the area (to around eight per cent of premises).

Outside of major urban areas, NBN Co has deployed fixed-line broadband to around 73 per cent of premises, with the remainder served by fixed wireless or satellite technology. NBN Co provides uniform national wholesale pricing for each technology.

The network is designed to provide access to peak wholesale download speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) to all premises and at least 50 Mbps to 90 per cent of fixed-line premises. NBN Co is implementing plans so the majority of premises will be able to access wholesale speeds of up to 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps) by 2023.

Prior to the introduction of the NBN in regional areas, consumers were limited to copper-based ADSL and other services with a theoretical maximum speed of 24 Megabits per second (Mbps) but which only offered average speeds of around 8 Mbps. ADSL was offered with geographically differentiated pricing. For example, some providers sell ADSL in regional areas and add a \$30 surcharge to the retail price of its ADSL metro plans.

The Australian Government is supporting NBN Co to increase the access and affordability of ultrafast broadband to businesses across Australia. Through a \$700m Business Fibre Initiative, NBN Co has created 295 Business Fibre Zones across the country, offering Enterprise Ethernet, NBN Co's highest grade business product which provides symmetrical speeds of up to 1 Gigabit per second, at CBD equivalent prices and at no upfront cost to businesses. Prior to this, businesses in regional areas were charged at a significantly higher rate than in metropolitan areas. This means wholesale savings of up to 68 per cent on business grade broadband in some regional areas. Nationally, 90 per cent of businesses now have access to NBN Co's Enterprise Ethernet product at no upfront cost.

#### ***Motion 88***

*The National General Assembly calls upon the Australian Government to ensure a fair balance is made between the requirements of telecommunications carriers to roll out 5G technology and the protection of public spaces from undesirable infrastructure proliferation as has occurred in other jurisdictions.*

*This motion was moved by Hobart City Council*

#### **Response**

The Australian Government is committed to Australians having ready access to high-quality, reliable and affordable telecommunications services. Telecommunications services play an important and expanding role in how people in the community go about their daily lives and how businesses operate. Often, this means new telecommunications facilities need to be installed to provide those services.

The Australian Government appreciates that people sometimes have concerns about the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure. These concerns need to be balanced against the community's need for modern communication services.

To provide these essential services, the Australian Government granted telecommunications companies powers to carry out certain activities related to the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure and immunity from some state and territory laws when doing so. This is known as the carriers' powers and immunities framework.

This is a way of balancing the community's need to access reliable, affordable telecommunications services, while making sure that local government and property owners get a chance to have their say about the deployment of those services.

The Australian Government is currently considering a number of reforms to the framework that are intended to improve and better balance the framework, having considered the interests of both carriers and landowners, such as local government authorities.

We would encourage local government authorities to continue engaging with the Australian Government on these reforms. Your feedback is critical to informing the Australian Government on whether the proposals strike the right balance between carrier and landowner interests, and facilitates consideration of further adjustments or alternative reforms.

### *Background*

Telecommunications companies have powers under Schedule 3 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (the Act) to access land to inspect, install 'low-impact' facilities, and maintain telecommunications facilities, and immunity from some state and territory laws when doing so, such as planning laws.

Low-impact facilities are those that:

- are essential to the efficient operation of telecommunications networks
- have low visual impact, and
- are unlikely to cause significant community disruption during installation or operation.

These laws encourage telecommunications companies to roll out networks using components that fall within strict type, size, colour and location limitations. For example, telecommunications companies use these powers to install pillars and antennae used to deliver landline and mobile communications services to the community.

Telecommunications companies are also prevented from installing low-impact facilities in areas of environmental significance. These types of areas can include areas that may be declared as having environmental significance in Commonwealth legislation, a listed international agreement, designated for nature conservation, or if the area includes a place, building or thing entered in a heritage conservation registers, or if the area is identified as being of significance to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, in accordance with their traditions.

The Australian Government expects telecommunications companies to engage with communities in a meaningful and sensitive way about proposed deployments. The Industry Code for Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment C564:2020 (the Industry Code) sets out processes that mobile carriers should follow when installing low-impact facilities. The Industry Code is designed to ensure that stakeholders are advised before a mobile phone base station is constructed, and that council and community views are taken into account.

Approvals for the installation of free-standing towers and poles to support telecommunications equipment for mobile phone base stations or fixed wireless internet generally fall under the relevant State and Territory planning laws. Telecommunications companies are required to follow the processes for community and local government consultations set out in the relevant State or Territory planning scheme. The application of state planning laws to new towers and poles ensures local communities have a say in the construction of a proposed facility, just as they would with any other major construction activity. Concerns about a state or territory's planning scheme should be raised with the relevant state or territory government. The Australian Government is not involved in local or state government planning processes.

***Motion 89***

*That this National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Federal Government to institute discussions with all telecommunications providers, as a matter of priority, with a view to rapidly bringing services in regional and rural areas of Australia up to standards comparable with those in metropolitan areas.*

*(Motion also sent to Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Cowra Shire Council*

**Response**

The Australian Government has committed \$380 million (GST Excl) to the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) with more than 1,270 mobile base stations funded under Rounds 1 to 5A, of which 950 have been built and are now on air. The Australian Government has committed \$80 million (GST Excl) to the next round (Round 6) to commence during 2021-22.

The Australian Government is also improving digital connectivity through the Regional Connectivity Program (the RCP) where it has committed \$183 million (GST Incl) to initiatives that will improve connectivity in regional and remote Australia, including \$117.4 million announced under Round 1 of the RCP; and an additional \$65.6 million for a second round. Furthermore, the Australian Government is providing \$68.5 million (GST Excl) to improve telecommunications infrastructure across Northern Australia through the RCP (\$41.4 million) and the MBSP (\$25.1 million).

The Australian Government has also announced the \$18 million (GST Excl) Mobile Network Hardening Program (MNHP) with Stage 1 of the program providing \$13.2 million (GST Incl) in Australian Government funding to the mobile network operators to improve network resilience by upgrading battery backup power at 467 base stations funded under Rounds 1 and 2 of the MBSP. The Australian Government has also committed \$16.4 million (GST Excl) to establish the Peri-Urban Mobile Program (PUMP) to improve mobile connectivity in bushfire prone areas on the peri-urban fringe of our major cities.

The Australian Government is supporting NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) to increase the access and affordability of ultrafast broadband to businesses across Australia. Through a \$700m Business Fibre Initiative, NBN Co has created 295 Business Fibre Zones across the country, offering Enterprise Ethernet, NBN Co's highest grade business product which provides symmetrical speeds of up to 1 Gigabit per second, at CBD equivalent prices and at no upfront cost to businesses. Prior to this, businesses in regional areas were charged at a significantly higher rate than in metropolitan areas. This means wholesale savings of up to 68 per cent on business grade broadband in some regional areas. Nationally, 90 per cent of businesses now have access to NBN Co's Enterprise Ethernet product at no upfront cost.

**Motion 96**

*That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to recommit to genuine partnership between three levels of Government in the City Deal model and commit resources to progress stalled negotiations; reconcile real progress against planned outcomes such as in the Western Sydney City Deal; and leverage the learnings from the current City Deals to inform improved and replicable models for future Deals.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)  
This motion was moved by Liverpool City Council*

**Response**

The outcomes of each City Deal are captured in an Annual Progress Report.



**The Hon Kevin Hogan MP**

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**Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister  
Assistant Minister for Local Government  
Federal Member for Page**

Ref: MC21-006028

Cr Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Cr Scott

Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2021 regarding motions from your recent National General Assembly.

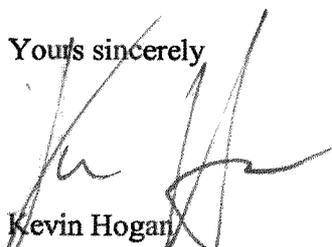
I note you also wrote to the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport; Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie MP, the Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience and the Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education; and the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts and they have responded separately about motions relating to their portfolios.

I acknowledge the tireless work that local governments have done around Australia, especially in 2020 and 2021, dealing with drought, bushfires, floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Local governments have made an outstanding effort to deliver record levels of stimulus projects to keep their communities and citizens safe and strong.

I am proud to be responsible for the Financial Assistance Grant program, the longest running program of Commonwealth support for local government, providing \$2.6 billion in 2020-21. I am also looking forward to working with you and the state and territory Local Government Ministers to ensure local governments have the skills and capability they need to continue being a valued Commonwealth partner.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and inform me of the outcomes from your National General Assembly.

Yours sincerely

  
Kevin Hogan

5/11/2021

## Motion 2

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to restore funding for local government Financial Assistance Grant to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

This motion was moved by Shellharbour Council

## Response

My Department's analysis indicates that funding to and through local government in 2020-21 was \$5.0 billion, significantly more than one per cent of available Commonwealth Taxation Receipts. The Financial Assistance Grant has not been tied to Commonwealth Taxation Receipts since 1986.

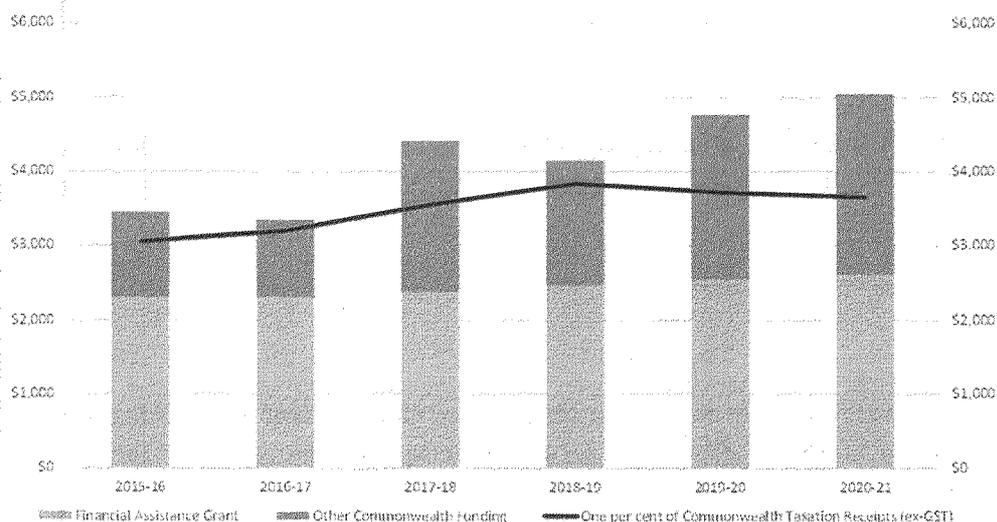
Australian Government funding to local government in 2020-21, included:

- \$2.6 billion in Financial Assistance Grant
- \$1.0 billion from the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program
- \$0.6 billion from the Roads to Recovery program
- \$0.9 billion in other Commonwealth programs.

Commonwealth Taxation Receipts in 2020-21, less GST revenue, was \$364.7 billion. Under the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations*, GST revenue must be provided directly to State and Territory Governments, so is not available for the Commonwealth to distribute to local government. Therefore, in 2020-21, one per cent of Commonwealth Taxation Receipts would have been \$3.6 billion.

It is also worth noting that the value of Commonwealth Taxation Receipts has decreased in the past two years. If the Financial Assistance Grant had been tied to the Commonwealth Taxation Receipts, funding to local governments would have decreased at a time when they most needed support following droughts, bushfires, floods and COVID-19.

**Commonwealth Funding to Local Government (million) v.  
One per cent of available Commonwealth Taxation Receipts (ex-GST)**



### Sources:

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications - Financial Assistance Grant and Departmental Funding  
Department of the Treasury - Commonwealth Taxation Receipts  
GrantConnect - Non Departmental Funding

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**Motion 2.1**

*The National General Assembly again calls on the Australian Government to increase funding for local government Financial Assistance Grant to a level of at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue by the 2022/23 Financial Year*

*This motion was moved by Tenterfield Shire Council*

**Response**

Please see the response to Motion 2.

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**Motion 3**

*That this National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to not vary the financial distribution of Financial Assistance Grant (FA Grant) until the FA Grant level is increased to 1% of Commonwealth tax revenue.*

*This motion was moved by Forbes Shire Council*

**Response**

The Financial Assistance Grant program is administered in accordance with the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995*. This includes the requirement for each local governing body in Australia to receive a minimum grant of no less than 30 percent of the amount to which the state or territory is entitled for the year on a per capita basis.

Some state and territory jurisdictions have indicated their preference to either remove or reduce the minimum grant requirement, as it limits their ability to direct funding on the basis of need.

While the Financial Assistance Grant program is legislated by the Commonwealth, it is designed to allow each jurisdiction a degree of discretion to determine and recommend individual council allocations. This reflects the reality that states and territories have primary responsibility for the financial sustainability of local governments, and are aware of the realities within their jurisdiction.

As changes to the current minimum grant arrangements would require legislative amendment, I welcome the views of all jurisdictions and the Australian Local Government Association on this matter.

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**Motion 4**

*That this National General Assembly calls upon the Federal Government to provide a one-off increase in the amount of Financial Assistance Grant made to Local Government for the 2021/22 year in recognition of the substantial costs incurred and revenue losses for all Councils as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial impacts of the resultant Federal, State and Territory Government restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of the disease.*

*This motion was moved by Maroondah City Council*

## **Response**

The Australian Government decided in both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years to bring forward an amount of \$1.3 billion each year from the annual Financial Assistance Grant allocation to help communities battling the effects of COVID-19.

Councils have advised that they value the early payments, particularly in regions that have faced the combined impacts of bushfire, drought, floods and COVID-19.

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## **Motion 5**

*The National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to provide grant funding to Regional and Rural Councils in advance and not in arrears so as to avoid impacting unfavourably on such Councils' cash flow.*

*This motion was moved by Tenterfield Shire Council*

## **Response**

In 2021-22, the Australian Government will provide \$2.7 billion in untied funding to local governing bodies under the Financial Assistance Grant program. This includes \$1.3 billion which was brought forward from the 2021-22 estimate and paid to states and territories on 7 June 2021. The remaining 2021-22 allocation to states and territories will be paid in four equal quarterly instalments scheduled for August, November, February and May.

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## **Motion 6**

*The National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to:*

- Increase in real terms its financial assistance to local government to ensure that Councils can continue to provide the necessary financial support to local businesses and the community for its economic recovery in the face of the continuing impacts of COVID-19; and*
- Reverse its decision to exclude employees of subsidiary organisations to local government from any future JobKeeper payment support that may be necessary for businesses significantly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19).*

*This motion was moved by Frankston City Council*

## **Response**

The Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) policy platform focusses on seeking an increase to the Financial Assistance Grant to one per cent of Commonwealth Taxation Receipts. As outlined in my response to Motion 2, the Department's analysis indicates that this portfolio's funding to and through local government in 2020-21 significantly exceeded one per cent of available Commonwealth Taxation Receipts.

In April 2020, all of Australia's first ministers agreed in a meeting of National Cabinet that states and territories would assume responsibility for the impacts of COVID-19 on their local government sector.

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### **Motion 7**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to partner with respective State and Territory Governments, as well as Local Government Areas (LGAs), to establish and administer dedicated Jobs and Skills Partnerships for LGAs, to help create local job pathways, align and improve employment, skill, and learning outcomes for local communities across Australia in response to COVID-19. Local Jobs and Skills Partnership would be responsible for the review, coordination and monitoring of Federal, State and local government efforts and resources, including social services, libraries and neighbourhood houses, right through to schools, TAFE, and higher education; as to ensure meaningful pathways are identified and created to employment on local infrastructure projects, as well as with relevant industries that require labour and will provide future job opportunities across respective regions.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Stuart Robert MP)*

*This motion was moved by Brimbank Shire Council*

### **Response**

The Australian Government's Local Jobs Program brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level to help job seekers connect to employment, reskilling and upskilling opportunities. Following the success of the initial Local Jobs Program, from 1 July 2021, the program was expanded to cover all 51 Employment Regions across Australia and extended to 30 June 2025.

The program has put in place employment facilitators in each region to support its delivery by bringing together key stakeholders including employers, employment services providers, higher education and training organisations as well as all levels of government to work collaboratively to address the workforce priorities of the region.

The employment facilitators also chair Local Jobs and Skills Taskforces, which comprise representatives from the local region with interest and experience in skills, workforce, and local economic development. They also connect and collaborate with others in the region and meet local labour market needs. The Taskforces work with stakeholders to develop a plan that identifies the region's key priorities. These plans, available on the program's website, are designed to be updated as the region's challenges and priorities evolve.

The Local Recovery Fund is available to support small scale initiatives that address the priorities identified within the region's Local Jobs Plan, supporting upskilling, reskilling and employment opportunities to meet local workforce needs.

In addition to Local Recovery Fund initiatives, the National Priority Fund supports innovative solutions to address structural and other barriers with the goal of creating a more effective and efficient labour market for job seekers, employees, employers and industry as a whole.

As critical stakeholders in their regions, if they have not already done so, I would encourage each local government to engage with the Employment Facilitator in their region, to discuss the challenges and opportunities within their communities. Contact details for facilitators can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment webpage at [www.dese.gov.au/local-jobs-program/employment-facilitators](http://www.dese.gov.au/local-jobs-program/employment-facilitators).

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### **Motion 7.2**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to expand the National Cabinet process to integrate and partner with local government, through the development, investment and support of dedicated COVID-19 Health, Wellbeing and Economic Response Packages for Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Australia.*

*This motion was moved by Brimbank Shire Council*

### **Response**

*On partnership with local government through National Cabinet processes:*

Australia's first ministers have agreed that National Cabinet should be a forum for leaders of the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, and that the National Federation Reform Council (NFRC), which comprises National Cabinet (First Ministers), CFFR (all Treasurers), and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), will be the primary intergovernmental forum for progressing issues of national significance.

Consistent with National Cabinet's decision of April 2020, the states and territories will take the lead on implementing social measures that involve local government as delivery partners. This decision recognises that local councils are established under state and territory legislation.

On 23 October 2020, the National Cabinet agreed Recommendation 4 of the Review of COAG Councils and Ministerial Forums (Conran Review) that ALGA should continue to be involved in relevant ministers' meetings (formally COAG and Ministerial Councils). This review acknowledged ALGA's important role in meetings across a number of portfolios where local governments have significant responsibilities, such as planning, infrastructure and community service provision.

National Cabinet also convenes a number of reform committees to focus on specific issues of national significance. Where local government has a role, ALGA's expertise may be sought by the relevant reform committee. National Cabinet has already asked the Rural and Regional National Cabinet Reform Committee (NCRC) to work closely with ALGA as the NCRC seeks to promote economic growth and job creation in rural and regional Australia following the acute impacts of COVID-19.

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### **Motion 7.3**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work closely with state and local government to develop appropriate funding mechanisms to enable local governments to establish community hubs for the co-location of key services such as education, youth services, counselling, and community health, in order to deliver comprehensive, integrated support to local communities, as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*This motion was moved by Nillumbik Shire Council*

### **Response**

The delivery arrangements for social services is primarily a state government responsibility, with Commonwealth funding provided to the states via intergovernmental agreements.

In most cases, states and territories retain the discretion to determine how to deliver services and, where relevant, which organisations to partner with for their delivery. This model acknowledges that the different jurisdictions have unique operating environments which would not suit a one-size-fits-all approach. I suggest that the state and territory local government associations present their proposals for council-run community hubs to the relevant minister in their jurisdiction.

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### **Motion 8**

*That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a funding program directed through local government to support those in sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In seeking support, the NGA advises that the new funding program should:*

- 1. Be separate to, and provide funding above and beyond that offered by, Financial Assistance Grant.*
- 2. Require local government to directly employ local people in the arts, entertainment and events industries, noting these are heavily impacted industries that have been least supported by the JobKeeper program due to a high instance of casual and contract labour, and which have been overlooked by significant stimulus funding from the Commonwealth Government.*
- 3. Recognise the ability of local government to expend stimulus funding efficiently and fairly.*
- 4. Place a focus on the importance of creative practitioners in developing solutions in local communities as part of economic recovery and community development.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Paul Fletcher MP)*

*This motion was moved by City of Melbourne*

### **Response**

The Australian Government provided more than \$10 billion in wage and cash flow support to the country's creative and cultural sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to analysis released by the Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research (BCARR). The analysis estimates that employees and businesses in cultural and creative sectors received \$10.7 billion from the Commonwealth to support their operations, including \$8 billion in JobKeeper payments between April and December 2020, and \$2.7 billion in Boosting Cash Flow for Employers payments to early February 2021.

The Australian Government has committed to Phase 3 of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) program. The additional \$1 billion announced in the 2021-22 budget brings the total Australian Government commitment to the LRCI program to \$2.5 billion. This program supports local councils to deliver priority local road and community infrastructure projects across Australia, supporting jobs and the resilience of local economies to help communities bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic. LRCI Phase 3 will continue to support local jobs and businesses at the time it is needed most.

From 1 January 2022, councils will be able to access funding through LRCI Phase 3, with projects under the program to be delivered by 30 June 2023. Eligible funding recipients can nominate a broad range of priority projects to fund so that local communities can continue to be provided with the infrastructure they require. Although there is no direct requirement for projects to employ people from the arts and entertainment industries, it is expected that

Eligible funding recipients will use local businesses and workforces to deliver projects wherever possible to ensure stimulus funding flows into local communities.

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### ***Motion 9***

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to either cease the practice of expecting Council co-contributions when applying for Federal Government Grants or allow Council's in-kind contributions to be eligible as the co-contribution from Councils.*

*This motion was moved by Tenterfield Shire Council*

### **Response**

Out of the current grant programs delivered by the Grants Hub Engagement team (the Hub), Stronger Communities Programme (SCP) and the Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) require a co-contribution from applicants as part of the eligibility criteria for the program. Each program's requirements are set out in published guidelines found at [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au).

At the conclusion of each round of grant programs delivered by the Hub, a review is undertaken to identify which aspects in its delivery worked well, where other components need improvement, and where policy design settings could be adjusted. These learnings are then considered in the program design for subsequent rounds.

The Australian Government is already providing considerable financial support to local government bodies in response to COVID-19. For this reason, local government bodies applying in their own right, or as a sponsor for another organisation, are not eligible for the co-funding exemption in SCP Round Six. Such local government bodies are then required to continue to provide matched funding contributions towards their eligible project.

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### ***Motion 9.1***

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to change the eligibility conditions for new grant funding opportunities which currently preclude projects already contained within operational plans. Projects in operational plans are often funded from loans adding to the financial burden on ratepayers.*

*This motion was moved by Tenterfield Shire Council*

### **Response**

From Phase 2 onward, the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program eligibility conditions allow projects contained within operational plans. The program guidelines require that overall capital expenditure is maintained to ensure that the LRCI program funding remains additional to intended expenditure and delivers a stimulus effect.

An additional \$1 billion for Phase 3 of the LRCI Program announced in the 2021-22 Budget will continue to boost Australia's economic recovery by continuing to support local jobs and businesses at the time it is needed most.

From 1 January 2022, councils will be able to access funding through LRCI Phase 3, with projects under the program to be delivered by 30 June 2023.

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### ***Motion 11***

*The National General Assembly calls on Australian, State and Territory Governments to:*

- *harmonise legislation, regulation, policies and practices to mitigate the financial and social impacts of anomalies on border communities across the nation, and*
- *adopt a national approach to management of the COVID-19 pandemic to eliminate the closure of State and Territory borders.*

*(Resolution also sent to The Hon. Greg Hunt MP)*

*This motion was moved by Albury City Council*

### **Response**

To support the *National Plan to Transition Australia's COVID-19 Response* (the Plan), the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC), and its sub-committee the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA), is undertaking strategic discussions on reopening to provide advice to National Cabinet. This advice will cover how jurisdictions can modify their testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine (TTIQ) at different levels of vaccine coverage to ensure the public health response is as effective in future reopening phases. It will also cover how the current public health and social measures (PHSM), such as lockdowns, border closures and movement restrictions, can be eased in response to local and jurisdictional contexts, as Australia reopens.

Under current policy settings and current vaccine coverage, more stringent PHSMs have been rapidly implemented in response to a small number of COVID-19 cases. While based on the same principles, jurisdictions have applied different intensity and type of PHSM. Moving away from this approach will require careful consideration to not overwhelm the public health workforce capacity and health care system, including Intensive Care Units.

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### ***Motion 12***

*That this National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to address the economic hardship people in rural and regional areas are experiencing due to the unique combined impacts of COVID-19, unprecedented bushfires, long running drought and/or flooding by providing additional support for recovery.*

*That this relief include:*

- Initiatives targeting the tourism and creative industries*
- an evaluation of and response to the youth and gender impacts of COVID-19*
- initiatives that will boost jobs and long-term community resilience to climate*
- restoration of funding for local government Financial Assistance Grant to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue*

*(Resolution also sent to Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Bendigo City Council*

## **Response**

- a) The Australian Government is funding a number of initiatives that support the tourism and creative industries including:

### *Adelaide City Deal*

The Adelaide City Deal is a 10-year agreement between the Australian Government, the Government of South Australia and the City of Adelaide to grow Adelaide as an innovative and vibrant city. Governments are working together to deliver projects and initiatives that support the growth of businesses and jobs, encourage the growth of Adelaide's population, and build on the city's global reputation in the arts and culture.

The Adelaide City Deal is supporting COVID and disaster recovery through initiatives that target tourism and creative industries as summarised below.

### *Aboriginal Art and Cultures Centre (\$200 million)*

The Aboriginal Art and Cultures Centre at Lot Fourteen will showcase the rich, diverse and enduring cultures of Australia's First Nations Peoples and attract people from across South Australia, Australia and internationally. Jobs will be created throughout the construction and operational phases across the arts, business and utilities sectors.

### *The Heysen Gallery in Hahndorf (\$9 million)*

The new Heysen Gallery in Hahndorf will be a dedicated space to display art by renowned Australian artists Hans and Nora Heysen, as well other Australian and international exhibitions. The Gallery will attract local, Australian and international visitors and create local jobs throughout construction and in the longer term operations of the Gallery.

### *Carrick Hill Visitors Pavilion (\$3 million)*

The visitor pavilion at the historic Carrick Hill House will provide an enhanced visitor experience for people visiting the historic Carrick Hill house and nearby Yurrebilla and Max Holbrook Trails. The pavilion will house a restaurant, cafe, function centre and gift shop. Local jobs will be created both throughout the construction and ongoing operations of the pavilion and the retail and hospitality premises.

### *Geelong City Deal*

Signed in March 2019, the \$382.48 million Geelong City Deal is a 10-year partnership between the three levels of Government. The funding comprises \$183.8 million Australian Government, \$174.2 million Victorian Government, \$10.28 million City of Greater Geelong, and includes \$12.25 million from other funding contributors.

Geelong and the Great Ocean Road region are domestic and international tourism destinations, and the Geelong City Deal investment will encourage returning visitors to dedicate more time to exploring the region and help support the region's transitioning economy. Implementation of the City Deal is contributing to economic diversification and jobs growth, supporting innovation and building on emerging industry strengths for Geelong and the Great Ocean Road region. Some of the key projects targeting the tourism industry, whilst creating employment opportunities across the Geelong region are summarised below.

### *Queenscliff Ferry Terminal (\$15.9 million)*

The development of a new ferry terminal at Queenscliff offers significant benefits to visitors, including safer access for pedestrians, high quality experiences and improved disability access. The terminal will deliver new jobs in the construction phase, and a major economic boost for the region. Construction of the terminal building has commenced.

### *Great Ocean Road Infrastructure Projects*

A number of key projects along the Great Ocean Road will help support growth in the visitor economy through strengthening the region as a leading tourism destination:

- Redevelopment of Apollo Bay Harbour (\$12 million)
- Apollo Bay to Skenes Creek Coastal Trail (\$5 million)
- Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River (\$1.9 million)

### *Priority Projects under the Shipwreck Coast Masterplan - Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment (\$108.15 million)*

This commitment includes development of a new Visitor Experience Centre, park and ride facility, transport access entry road, landscaping works and walking trails, and a range of priority coastal works. The project includes \$23.4 million funding to support business enablement and activate private investment opportunities along the Shipwreck Coast through the establishment of a grants process to administer a Private Sector Business Enablement Fund.

### *b) An evaluation of and response to the youth and gender impacts of COVID-19*

The Office for Women administers the Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP), to fund and deliver a range of projects for Australian Women. The program contributes to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Outcome 1. The objective of the WLDP is to improve outcomes for Australian women in six key priority areas:

- Women's Job Creation
- Women's Economic Security
- Women's Workforce Participation
- Women's Leadership
- Women's Safety
- International Engagement

There are two grant funding streams under the WLDP:

1. The WLDP Project Grants stream supports a range of projects that achieve tangible improvements in outcomes for Australian women linked to the Government's six key priority areas. Grant opportunities under this stream seek applications for projects that contribute to the achievement of all, one, or a combination of the six key priority areas listed above.
2. The National Women's Alliances stream supports a grant opportunity to fund the formation of six civil society networks, known as National Women's Alliances, to ensure that women's voices are heard in the policymaking process.

Further information on addressing gendered impacts can be found on the Office for the Status of Women website at [www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/grants-and-funding](http://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/grants-and-funding).

Supporting youth mental health is a key priority of the Australian Government. Headspace is the Government's flagship program for provision of services to young people aged 12-25 experiencing, or at risk, of mild to moderate mental illness. As part of the 2021–22 Budget, the Government is expanding the headspace network, with funding of \$278.6 million over the next four years. This includes establishing ten new headspace centres and upgrading five satellite services, bringing the total number of headspace services across Australia to 164 by 2025-26.

The Government funds Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to plan and commission regionally appropriate mental health and suicide prevention services within a person-centred stepped care approach that matches services to local need, including headspace. The Department of Health works closely with headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation and PHNs to ensure that young Australians continue to have access to mental health services where and when they need it. For those young people unable to attend a physical headspace service, headspace provides free, telephone and web-based support services to young people aged 12-25 years with, or at risk of developing mental illness.

The Government is committed to closing care gaps in rural, regional and remote Australia by increasing the availability of services, including digital and telehealth services. The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (Plan) outlines what the government is doing to support rural, regional and remote Australia, including increasing access to youth mental health services and boosting the workforce.

c) Initiatives that will boost jobs and long-term community resilience to climate

*COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Fund*

In March 2020, the Australian Government established a \$1 billion COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Fund to support regions, communities and industry sectors that have been disproportionately affected by the Coronavirus crisis. The initiatives announced under the Fund are supporting industries including aviation, agriculture, fisheries, tourism and the arts.

Support has been tailored to meet the needs of communities and industries that needed assistance during the crisis and into recovery. This includes:

- fee or levy relief - applied through existing mechanisms, requiring little or no action by businesses;
- increasing payments through existing grant programs - in ways that are quick and simple to deliver; or
- establishing targeted new programs to support the particular needs of an industry sector.

Further information on the initiatives that are currently part of the fund can be found at [www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regions/regional-community-programs/covid-19-relief-recovery-fund](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regions/regional-community-programs/covid-19-relief-recovery-fund).

Under this funding, the Australian Government has committed \$100 million over two years to fund Regional Recovery Partnerships in 10 regions across Australia. The Partnerships coordinate investments with all levels of government to support recovery and growth, delivering jobs and economic diversification in line with regional priorities.

The 10 regions are:

- The Snowy Mountains; Hunter and Newcastle; and Parkes Regions (NSW)
- Cairns and Tropical North Queensland; Gladstone; and Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday Regions (Qld)
- All of Tasmania
- Gippsland Region (VIC)
- Kangaroo Island(SA)
- South West Region (WA).

Further information on the projects funded under the Partnership can be found at [www.regional.gov.au/regional/recovery-partnerships](http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/recovery-partnerships).

### *Future Drought Fund*

Strong rural communities are a critical underpinning for the drought resilience of Australian agriculture. The Government is investing an additional \$8 million to 2023-24 in building community leaders, mentors, organisations and networks to drive action on drought resilience and support their community in tough times. This additional funding builds on \$11.2 million of existing investment.

The Australian Government's \$5 billion Future Drought Fund (FDF) is about building drought resilience; helping farmers and regional communities become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought.

Building social capital is a critical underpinning. It is the community leaders, mentors, organisations and networks in farming communities that drive change and help people when times get tough. This support includes two programs that focus on leadership and networks in rural and regional communities:

### *Drought Resilience Leaders program*

The Government has partnered with the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation to develop a cohort of drought resilient leaders, and mentoring networks, across Australia. Additional funding of \$4 million adds to \$7.45 million already invested. That existing investment targets the development of a cohort of at least 480 future leaders across 12 regions, and mentoring network of 250 mentors and 300 mentees.

Applications to participate in the Leadership Development program for the second of two pilot regions are now underway. Applications across the remaining 10 regions open from October 2021.

Applications for the Drought Resilience Mentoring program opened on 21 July for the program to commence in January 2022. Targeting of the additional funding will be informed by feedback and lessons learnt from the existing investment.

### *Networks to Build Drought Resilience program*

The Government has partnered with the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal to provide small-scale grants for community organisations, networks and infrastructure that supports drought resilience. Additional funding of \$4 million adds to \$3.75 million already invested. That existing investment will support two grant rounds, with the first of which opened in May 2021.

Targeting of the additional funding will be informed by feedback and lessons learnt from the existing investment. For more information, see Future Drought Fund [www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/future-drought-fund](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/future-drought-fund).

### *The Drought Communities Programme - Extension*

The extension of the Drought Communities Programme, which closed in January 2020, provided funding of \$301 million to eligible councils for drought-affected regions of Australia. The program supports local community infrastructure and other drought relief projects for communities impacted by drought.

The programme provided councils with up to either \$1million or \$500,000 per announcement for drought relief projects. Funding targeted projects that:

- provided work for people whose employment has been impacted by drought
- stimulated local community spending
- use local resources, businesses and suppliers
- provided a long-lasting benefit to communities and the agricultural industries they depend on.

### d) One per cent of Commonwealth Taxation Revenue

Please see the response to Motion 2.

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### **Motion 12.1**

*That the National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to provide additional direct funding to significantly impacted local government bodies from 2020 to support ongoing recovery efforts which are well in excess of regional and rural councils being able to address.*

*(Resolution also sent to Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Bega Valley Shire Council*

### **Response**

Under Australian governance arrangements, state and territory governments (the states) have primary responsibility for responding to natural disasters, including providing assistance to disaster-affected communities. The Australian Government provides support to the states through the jointly-funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to assist with the costs of providing certain relief and recovery assistance to disaster-affected communities.

The DRFA is authorised by the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations. Under this Agreement, the Australian Government can only provide funding directly to the states. While the DRFA can facilitate funding to local governments for a range of relief and recovery activities—including the establishment of evacuation and recovery centres, certain counter disaster operations and the restoration of damaged public assets—this is appropriately done in consultation with the states.

If disaster-affected local governments have significant ongoing recovery needs that have not been addressed following a disaster, they should liaise directly with their state to determine whether a request for additional joint Commonwealth-state DRFA support is appropriate. The Commonwealth is also investing in disaster preparedness, to mitigate the risks of future

natural disasters. This includes programs such as the \$600 million Preparing Australia Program, which aims to limit the impact of future disasters through both public and private risk reduction.

The Australian Government provided \$62 million in payments to local councils under the LGA Grants Program following the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires to assist the most severely impacted Local Government Areas to quickly rebuild vital infrastructure and strengthen community resilience.

The Local Economic Recovery (LER) funding implemented in response to the Black Summer bushfires is also delivering up to \$700 million (co-funded with the states) supporting the locally-led medium and long term social and economic recovery needs of communities. To date, \$303.8 million (\$607.6 million including state contributions) in community projects have been announced that are bringing economic, social and other benefits to communities, improving infrastructure, creating jobs, supporting local needs, attracting visitors and helping key local industries. Approximately 40 per cent of LER project funding is going to local councils to fund Council-sponsored projects.

The Australian Government recommends that ALGA supports its members to access the Commonwealth direct funding opportunities, particularly those members in regional and rural areas.

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### ***Motion 16***

*That this National General Assembly of Local Government call on the Commonwealth and states and Territory Governments to ensure that ALGA, State Associations and local Councils are appropriately represented on advisory groups and projects linked to the new National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency being established by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to ensure that both local government local and community voices are heard in the important work that will be led by this agency.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Bega Valley Shire Council*

### **Response**

The National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRA) was established in response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. The NRRA supports the vital role that ALGA, and each local government plays in supporting preparedness and recovery from natural disasters. Local Governments are at the forefront of the impacts of natural hazards, supporting community events, infrastructure and recovery and building community resilience.

The NRRA has a dedicated Local Government Adviser who reports directly to the Coordinator General. The Advisory Board that supports the Agency includes a range of leading industry, government and local government advocates. The NRRA also has a network of embedded Recovery Support Officers (RSO) who work closely with local governments, industry and community groups to support recovery and resilience activities. The RSOs ensure local voices are represented in decision making and policy and programs are adapted to suit local conditions.

The NRRA recognises and values ALGA and its members as key stakeholders, engaging ALGA and members on a number of initiatives including the Preparing Australia Program, representation on the Steering Committee to develop a National Recovery Training program,

Advisory Group position on the National Recovery Exercising program and through engagement on the National Disaster Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework and Mental Health National Action Plan for First Responders.

The NRRRA will also be engaging with relevant local government members to establish Pilot Regional Resilience Hubs to host Commonwealth, state and local government officials and non-government stakeholders to build resilience and recovery capabilities in regional communities.

NRRRA will continue to engage ALGA and its members regularly and welcomes the advice and guidance of ALGA and member organisations in supporting recovery and resilience activities.

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### ***Motion 18***

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to include a 'pandemic' under the definition of an 'eligible disaster' under the Disaster Recover Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Guidelines to enable local government costs to be claimed in line with other 'disaster' events.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Balonne Shire Council*

### **Response**

Under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018 (DRFA), a natural disaster is defined as 'one, or a combination of the following rapid onset events: bushfire; earthquake; flood; storm; cyclone; storm surge; landslide; tsunami; meteorite strike or tornado'. Health responses to infectious disease outbreaks are not covered under the DRFA. Instead, the Australian Government is working directly with all jurisdictions to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated health and economic response to COVID-19.

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### ***Motion 38***

*This National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Australian Government to:*

- 1. acknowledge that Local Government across Australia continue to demonstrate strong leadership in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by undertaking a range of actions across the nation such as:
  - a) supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart which calls on the Australian people to walk with First Nations in a people's Motion for Voice, Treaty, Truth.*
  - b) by endorsing the Uluru Statement and sharing this support by publicly displaying the Uluru Statement and putting up posters in prominent locations throughout local council areas; and*
  - c) encouraging all Councils to register support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart on the website <https://www.Ivoiceuluru.org/>**
- 2. calls on the Australian Government to support Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the key principles of the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart'.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM, MP)*

*This motion was moved by Randwick City Council*

### **Response**

The Australian Government acknowledges the leadership of local government and supports the key principles of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The Morrison Government is committed to recognising Indigenous Australians in the Constitution and will hold a referendum when a consensus is reached and it has the best chance of success.

To successfully bring about constitutional change, Australians must clearly understand and support the proposed amendments. Only eight out of 44 past referenda have been successful and it is important we learn from this and agree to wording that is acceptable to the majority of Australians. We must be pragmatic and consider options that provide the greatest chance of success.

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### ***Motion 39***

*That this National General Assembly call for the establishment of an appropriate advisory structure and/or representative voice to Local Government comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across Australia to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a say about Councils' decisions that affect them and to guide Councils' broader work relating to First Nations peoples, truth telling, sovereignty, treaty-making and addressing systemic racism.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM, MP)*

*This motion was moved by Darebin City Council*

### **Response**

A robust 18-month co-design process to develop proposals for Local and Regional Voices and a National Voice has recently concluded. Co-design groups, made up of 52 members from around the country, have led this process to design the detail of an Indigenous Voice and over 9,400 people have had their say on the proposals.

Consultation feedback strongly supported an Indigenous Voice at local, regional and national levels, as well as a notion of an approach for Local & Regional Voices that would see them providing advice to and working in partnership with all levels of government, including local governments.

The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP received the Final Report in July 2021. I understand that Minister Wyatt has informed you that it is a significant report that comprehensively details the proposals and the deliberations of the co-design process, and it deserves thorough consideration by the Government. The importance of this report and what it means for Indigenous Australians means it is too important to rush this consideration process. We want to get this right.

I encourage your members to read the submissions and summaries from the consultations online at [www.voice.niaa.gov.au](http://www.voice.niaa.gov.au). There is also information about the co-design process, Indigenous Voice proposals and the co-design Interim Report.

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### **Motion 40**

*The National General Assembly (NGA) calls on the Federal, State and Territory Governments to commit to nationally consistent recognition of Indigenous Local Government Councils as an Aboriginal controlled entity across Australia at all levels of Government. Indigenous Local Government Council being a Local Government Council with a majority representation of both Elected Officials and Constituency of Indigenous Australians.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM, MP)*

*This motion was moved by East Arnhem Regional Council*

### **Response**

The Commonwealth's recognition of a council as a local governing body is determined by its establishment by, or under a law of, a state or territory and its declaration by the Minister on the advice of the relevant State Minister. To achieve a nationally harmonised approach to the recognition of Indigenous councils, the Australian Local Government Association should seek to progress this matter through the National Federation Reform Council.

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### **Motion 41**

*That this National General Assembly*

- 1. Calls on Australian Local Government Association, as the lead member and advocacy body for Local Government in Australia to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan for the Australian Local Government Association.*
- 2. Calls on the Australian Government to fund a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Safety Training Program for all Local Government Elected Members and Council Staff as an act of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM, MP)*

*This motion was moved by Darwin City Council*

### **Response**

*Motion 41 - 1: The Australian Local Government Association develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.*

The Morrison Government supports Motion 41a. Reconciliation Action Plans are an important way for any organisation to commit to activities that work towards reconciliation. I encourage your members to refer to the information provided by Reconciliation Australia at [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au).

*Motion 41 -2: Fund a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Safety Training Program for all Local Government Elected Members and Council staff.*

There are two programs developed by the Morrison Government that your members can access; The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) CORE program and the NIAA's Footprints program.

CORE is a national cultural awareness training program available by subscription to AIATSIS. CORE was developed by AIATSIS in partnership with the Department of the

Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Social Services and builds on many years of research and involvement in cultural competence initiatives.

CORE provides a detailed exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and issues; to assist and enhance cultural understanding; gain a deeper sense of self-awareness and critical reflection; and enhance personal and professional capacity to engage respectfully and effectively in an intercultural context. CORE promotes dialogue between participants and contributes to cultural safety in workplaces. Further information is available at [aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au).

The Footprints program is a continuous cultural learning and development framework that may be adopted by any organisation, large or small, at no cost. The Footprints program encourages participants to strengthen their cultural competency and embed respectful learnings about the diverse cultural backgrounds of all Australians and increase their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, peoples and histories. The Australian Local Government Association can contact the NIAA Footprints team at [footprints@niaa.gov.au](mailto:footprints@niaa.gov.au) for program details and how to initiate the program in any organisation.

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#### ***Motion 45***

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to investigate and explore a partnership between local government and Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation to ensure young people in rural, remote, isolated, and public transport-deprived areas gain access to appropriate and relevant youth mental health services.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Lake Macquarie City*

#### **Response**

Please see the above response to Motion 12.

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#### ***Motion 46***

*The National General Assembly (NGA) calls on the Australian Government to:*

- 1. Formulate a Liveability Plan for Regional Australia and to take immediate action to manage and ultimately eliminate the Mental Health issues currently affecting young people living in Regional Australia.*
- 2. Make a lasting and meaningful commitment to provide sustained financial support to proven intervention services or directly to Councils to assist in local programs or engage external services such as Youth In-search.*

*The Liveability Plan should urgently address the following significant issues, which are being felt so extensively throughout Regional Australia:*

- 1) Healthcare;*
- 2) Mental Health;*
- 3) Connectivity;*
- 4) Housing Availability;*

- 5) *Traineeships and Apprenticeships for youth.*
- 6) *The expansion and assistance with Renewable Energy projects, which will inject significant employment into Regional Australia*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Glen Innes Severn Council*

## **Response**

### *1. Healthcare;*

The Government invests in a range of health support services to support regional Australia, for example progressing:

- a Youth Taskforce Grants Scheme to support small community-based youth projects to improve the outcomes or wellbeing of young people and for COVID-19 recovery efforts.
- Several measures aimed at restoring physical functioning among residents of aged care facilities following COVID-19 outbreaks.
- PHN support of local GP participation in the COVID-19 response and the national vaccine rollout.

### *2. Mental Health;*

The Government invests in a range of mental health support services to support regional Australia, for example funding:

- Primary Health Networks to plan and commission regionally appropriate primary mental health and suicide prevention services;
- digital mental health treatment options, such as Lifeline Australia, Kids Helpline, ReachOut, Mindspot (online clinic), and SANE Australia, which can be accessed from the Government's digital mental health gateway Head to Health at [headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au);
- investing in headspace as its flagship program for provision of services to young people aged 12-25 experiencing, or at risk, of mild to moderate mental illness. For those young people unable to attend a headspace service, eheadspace provides free, telephone and web-based support services are available; and
- access to the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) initiative (Better Access) treatment sessions via telehealth.

The Government is also progressing:

- A National Mental Health Workforce Strategy to identify practical approaches that could be implemented by Australian governments to attract, train and retain the workforce required to meet the demands of the mental health system in the future, including in regional, rural and remote areas. This work is being informed by an independent Taskforce who are due to provide their advice to Government by the end of 2021.
- A National Rural and Remote Mental Health Strategy, to respond to the 2018 Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into accessibility and quality of

mental health services in rural and remote Australia (Senate Inquiry). The strategy is due to be finalised by the end of 2021 (Health).

*3. Connectivity;*

Please see the above response to Motion 86.

*4. Housing Availability;*

Please see the above response to Motion 94.

*5. Traineeships and Apprenticeships for youth.*

Please see the above response to Motion 7.

*6. The expansion and assistance with Renewable Energy projects, which will inject significant employment into Regional Australia.*

To support the uptake of electric and other low emissions vehicles, the Australian Government announced the Future Fuels Package on 17 September 2020, which will support jobs, strengthen our economy and reduce emissions through investments in new and emerging vehicle technologies. The Government has also announced its long-term emissions reduction plan. [Australia's Long-Term Emissions Reduction Plan | Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources](#)

The Future Fuels Package is a \$74.5 million investment to help consumers, businesses and communities take advantage of opportunities offered by new technologies, including hybrid vehicles, battery electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. The Package includes \$16.5 million to support battery electric vehicle fast charging stations across capital cities and key regional centres. This is in addition to the \$21 million already invested by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency for two major electric vehicle charging networks across Australia.

For further information on this motion, please refer to the response to Motion 78.

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***Motion 47***

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to ensure that:*

- 1. local government receives an appropriate and equitable share of Federal arts and cultural funding*
- 2. local councils are recognised as arts organisations and made eligible to apply for all funding opportunities.*

*To support this campaign, the National General urges councils across Australia to adapt the ALGA arts and culture position statement and assist with joint advocacy.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Paul Fletcher MP)*

*This motion was moved by Blacktown City Council*

**Response**

The Australian Government recognises the strong contribution that local councils make to the arts and culture and will continue to enable local councils to be considered for program grant funding as appropriate. Arts and cultural funding supports artists and arts organisations across Australia, including through a number of programs designed to support regional and remote communities. This support complements investments by state and local governments to strengthen the arts and culture.

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***Motion 48***

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to continue to invest in arts and culture stimulus programs (including capital investments) to ensure this sector of the economy can rebuild and that investments reach local communities.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Paul Fletcher MP)*

*This motion was moved by Penrith City Council*

**Response**

The Australian government will continue to invest in arts and culture stimulus programs to help rebuild the economy. In 2021-22, the Government is providing more than \$1 billion of support through the arts portfolio.

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***Motion 66***

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a formal transparent framework of contacts for Local Government to liaise effectively with Federal Government partners.*

*This motion was moved by Shoalhaven City Council*

**Response**

I am open to hearing from my stakeholders if they have any ideas on how to improve communications. I look forward to receiving more information regarding this proposal for further consultation and consideration of this matter.

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***Motion 67***

*That the Federal Government provides funding to financially support local councils in the restoration and remediation of local cemeteries that have been severely damaged from climatic conditions and drought.*

*This motion was moved by Broken Hill City Council*

**Response**

While the restoration and remediation of local cemeteries fall within the responsibilities of the state and territories, local councils are able to direct any untied funds, such as those received from the Federal Government's Financial Assistance Grant, to such restorative projects.

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**Motion 68**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide grant funding to assist Councils deal with the costs incurred in correcting historical errors in mapping of actual roads so that ratepayers do not have to meet these costs.*

*This motion was moved by Tenterfield Shire Council*

**Response**

My department is aware of the importance of accurate road location data and can play a part in addressing it by endorsing just one of the many alternative base maps used to geo-locate roads. The recommended base map, once chosen, can then be used as part of the National Freight Data Hub, the National Service Level Standards for roads, and the Austroads Data Standard.

The weight of national usage will be the start of encouraging all road managers, including local councils, to move over time to the same base map. Funding to assist local councils improve their systems for managing roads is being examined under other initiatives such as the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's Strategic Local Government Asset Assessment Program and Heavy Vehicle Road Reform.

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**Motion 71**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to hold a referendum to amend the Constitution to recognise local government as an important, legitimate, and essential element in Australia's system of government.*

*This motion was moved by Leeton Shire Council*

**Response**

The Australian Government welcomes your interest in including local government in the Australian Constitution. As previous attempts have shown, success will rely on positive engagement and careful planning.

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**Motion 72**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to both increase Financial Assistance Grant overall and address the rural and metropolitan rates divide that results in an imbalance in the capacity of rural councils to service communities and rural ratepayers to service rates.*

*This motion was moved by Mildura Rural City Council  
Amendment by City of Melbourne agreed.*

**Response**

Please see the above responses to Motion 2.1 and Motion 3.

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**Motion 73**

*That the National General Assembly advocate to the Federal Government, and in particular the Minister for Local Government, for an increase in the Financial Assistance Grant to support local governments to deliver a range of services including roads maintenance.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP)*

*This motion was moved by Mitchell Shire Council*

**Response**

The Financial Assistance Grant program is one of the very few untied funding programs provided to local government across Australia. I understand and appreciate the Financial Assistance Grant program allows local councils to fund local priorities, particularly in regional and rural councils with fewer alternative sources of revenue.

As you may be aware, the Financial Assistance Grant program is entrenched in Commonwealth legislation, which provides certainty and transparency of funding. The legislation provides for annual growth in the national allocation, by indexing the national and state allocations according to population and economic growth.

The Commonwealth calculates each jurisdiction's funding according to this formula, which generally provides for steady increases to jurisdiction allocations.

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**Motion 74**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with state/territory Local Government Grants Commissions across Australia, to ensure the allocation of federal road funding is distributed to local governments in accordance with the National Principles of horizontal equalisation as required by the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP)*

*This motion was moved by Wakefield Regional Council*

**Response**

As part of the process of allocating Financial Assistant Grant payments to state and territory governments, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications reviews council allocation proposals from the jurisdictions to confirm they are consistent with the National Principles and the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995*. These proposals are prepared after consultation with local government grants commissions in each state and the Northern Territory

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**Motion 75**

*The National General Assembly request that the Federal Government investigate a forward funding acquisition scheme that will enable local governments to provide infrastructure supporting the development of national assets; and that the investigation also consider*

*funding opportunities through a value capture process or increased funds generated in the existing tax regime due to higher land values and transaction volumes associated with areas of major infrastructure delivery.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP)*

*This motion was moved by Liverpool City Council*

**Response:**

The department is aware that value capture is being further considered by infrastructure bodies and all levels of governments in Australia. The department has negotiated value capture arrangements with the NSW Government for the Western Sydney Airport rail project.

There will be developments in value capture, including given recommendations from the NSW Productivity Commission for the NSW Government. The department will continue to review value capture opportunities as major projects are developed.

In 2014, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed the National Partnership Agreement on Asset Recycling (NPA). The NPA was a key feature of the Commonwealth Government's Infrastructure Growth Package, announced in the 2014-15 Budget.

The objective of the NPA was to unlock funds from existing state-owned assets to invest in additional infrastructure. Asset recycling supports investment in additional infrastructure that will support economic growth and enhance productivity.

Clause 36 of the NPA states that a review must be completed by the Commonwealth approximately 12 months prior to its expiry on 30 June 2019. In June 2018, a review of the NPA on asset recycling (the Review) was commissioned by the then Commonwealth Treasurer, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, to assess the degree to which the NPA objective and outcomes have been achieved and inform decisions regarding the appropriate treatment following its expiry. The review was published in January 2019.

Consultation with the states, territories and other stakeholders revealed that the NPA did assist in reducing infrastructure funding constraints for the jurisdictions that participated and were able to agree schedules with the Commonwealth before 30 June 2016 (New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory).

The NPA was influential in bringing forward assets for divestment. Commonwealth support for transactions meant that a reform package that included additional Commonwealth funding played a role in garnering additional community support. Further, the NPA provided an impetus for government decisions to be made.

By the time the NPA expired, in June 2019, the initiative was expected to provide \$2.3 billion in funding to the participating jurisdictions and unlocked over \$15 billion in additional economic infrastructure. The investment in additional infrastructure supported an increase in economic activity through increased construction activity and employment demand.

The NPA also had a role in bringing forward the timing of infrastructure investments. For some jurisdictions, the additional balance sheet capacity as a result of asset divestment allowed for investment in projects earlier than previously planned.

While it is too early to determine the precise impact on the productive capacity of the economy of the additional infrastructure, participants expressed a view that it had a positive influence on productive capacity.

The review identified a number of technical issues in the way the NPA was structured. Primarily, some definitions caused confusion when trying to apply them during

implementation of the NPA. For example, the definition of ‘additional’ infrastructure had various interpretations.

The consultations with states and territories found that the timeframes in the NPA were seen as a barrier by some jurisdictions. It was suggested that the NPA timeframe effectively precluded projects where preliminary analysis had not previously been undertaken. However, most stakeholders agreed that the timeframes in the NPA provided an incentive for jurisdictions to make decisions about asset divestment and reinvestment. In particular, the “first come, first serve” approach to funding meant that jurisdictions had an incentive to make decisions and it maintained the momentum of the NPA.

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### ***Motion 76***

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to invest in nation building projects where it can be established, they will facilitate better road and transport connections between cities and with regions around Australia. The criteria for these projects should be based on the economic opportunities they create for freight and passenger Motion, migration, service provision and business support, as these are known to contribute best to our national productivity. This motion has been developed in collaboration with the Lachlan Shire Council and will be submitted jointly.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP)*

*This motion was moved by Penrith City Council*

### **Response:**

#### *Inland Rail*

Inland Rail is a key initiative of the Australian Government’s \$110 billion infrastructure pipeline that includes major road and rail upgrades that will better connect regional communities to domestic and international markets. Inland Rail is a 1,700km freight rail line directly connecting Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It will provide cost-competitive and reliable freight transport with a transit time of under 24 hours, and also provide benefits such as economic stimulus, jobs support, reduced emissions and road safety outcomes.

Funded by the Australian Government, the project is being delivered by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), in partnership with the private sector. The project will build on existing regional and rural rail connections that provide access to the ports of Melbourne, Port Kembla, Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth via Parkes.

#### *Roads service level standards framework*

In 2018, Infrastructure and Transport Ministers agreed to develop nationally consistent service level standards for all roads. A framework has been built for those standards, consisting of national road categories, customer service outcomes, and metrics on how to measure achievement of those outcomes. The framework will systematically ask (a) what is the function of each road and (b) what do customers value.

There are seven categories of road, reflecting a hierarchy across both social function (connecting communities) and economic function (enabling economic activity).

There are eight customer outcomes to capture the aspects of service road users value: travel time reliability and efficiency, accessibility, resilience, amenity/experience, place, safety, environment/health and being informed.

These national service level standards will provide road managers and road users all across Australia with new information they can use to inform investment decisions.

#### *Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme*

Since 1976, the Australian Government has provided financial assistance through the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES) to reduce the added cost incurred by Tasmanian shippers of transporting eligible non-bulk goods moved by sea across the Bass Strait.

The objective of TFES is to provide Tasmanian industries with equal opportunities to compete in other markets, recognising that, unlike their mainland counterparts, Tasmanian shippers do not have the option of transporting goods interstate by road or rail.

Since 1996, the Australian Government has provided rebates for eligible passenger vehicles under the Bass Strait Passenger Vehicle Equalisation Scheme (BSPVES) to reduce the cost of sea travel between mainland Australia and Tasmania. Travellers that access the BSPVES consists of passengers who travel on holidays, for business and to visit family.

#### *Road Safety Program*

The Australian Government has committed \$3 billion to road safety upgrades through the Road Safety Program—applying lifesaving road treatments where they're needed most. This program is funding a fast roll out of lifesaving road safety treatments on rural and regional roads and protection for vulnerable road users in urban/peri-urban areas. Projects underway on rural and regional roads are targeting road network safety gaps and aim to raise the safety standards on high-risk highways and arterial roads to a minimum of 'three star' while urban and peri-urban projects are providing protection to vulnerable road users through interventions such as separated footpaths and cycleways. Further examples of projects being funded include upgrades to level crossings, to reduce conflicts between road vehicles and rail, and upgrades to facilities at heavy and light vehicle rest stops, encouraging drivers to take breaks on long journeys.

#### *Infrastructure Investment Program*

The Australian Government is investing \$110 billion over 10 years from 2021-22 in transport infrastructure across Australia through its rolling infrastructure pipeline, of which a substantial component is under the Infrastructure Investment Program (IIP).

As part of the IIP the Australian Government is investing \$4.9 billion in the Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) initiative to help connect regional businesses to local and international markets, and better connect regional communities.

The Australian Government has increased investment in key freight routes, including \$1.4 billion for the Princes Highway corridor and \$591.6 million for Newell Highway Upgrades, to ensure a safer and more efficient road network for all Australians.

Significant upgrades also continue to be made to other key freight routes, including the North-South Corridor in South Australia, the Midland Highway in Tasmania. The final

section of the Pacific Highway Upgrade in New South Wales opened to traffic in December 2020.

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#### **Motion 84**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to initiate a "Natural Disaster Preventative Measures Fund" to provide financial assistance to Local Government for planning mitigation strategies for extreme natural disaster events.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Parkes Shire Council*

#### **Response**

The Australian Government is investing in measures designed to increase the resilience and preparedness of communities across Australia to manage the often devastating impacts of natural disaster. The National Recovery and Resilience Agency is committed to driving this important Government priority, including through meaningful collaboration with all levels of Government, including local government.

In 2020-21, the \$50 million resilience component from the Emergency Response Fund was allocated to the National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program (NFMIP). Under this program, 22 flood mitigation infrastructure projects across all states and territories received funding. This program will see state and territory governments working closely with local governments to deliver important flood resilience outcomes across Australian communities.

The Government is also investing heavily in disaster risk reduction through the \$600 million Preparing Australia Program to improve long-term resilience of Australian communities. More details about the program, including potential support for local government, will be available before the end of 2021.

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#### **Motion 85**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to accept and implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission on National Natural Disasters pertaining to an enhanced role for the Commonwealth in coordinating the established levels of state, territory, and local council response, and affording Commonwealth assistance as requested by established local and state authorities. This will ensure a national response to emergencies that will facilitate our communities' resilience following disasters.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Bridget McKenzie MP)*

*This motion was moved by Shoalhaven City Council*

#### **Response**

A number of changes have been made to the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF) to incorporate recommendations from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements and budget announcements, to provide clarity for stakeholders through amended language, account for situations that were previously not covered, and embed new processes. Budget initiative updates include:

- Establishment of the National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRA)
- Establishment of the Australian Climate Service
- Enhancements to EMA including.

Governance and architectural changes include:

- The new seven phase National Disaster Management and Recovery Continuum
- Embedding the role of the National Coordination Mechanism which operationalises the AGCMF. Through the National Coordination Mechanism the Commonwealth coordinates the established levels of state, territory, and local council response to National natural disasters.
- Disbanding the National Crisis Committee and collapsing it into the National Coordination Mechanism.
- The application of the National Emergency Declaration (NED) Act 2020.

The High Risk Weather Season Preparedness and Engagement Program provides face-to-face meetings between key Government and jurisdictional emergency management leaders and decision-makers. The Program has commenced and is running from September to October 2021 and will include all the states and territories. There will also be preparedness briefing sessions to representatives from other Australian Government agencies, major charities and Non-Government Organisations.

The Australian Government is providing \$30.2m Funding for National Aerial Fire Fighting including \$4m for a national LAT expecting to be operating in December 2021.

The Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN) is the plan for the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance to Australian states and territories in an emergency or disaster. The Minister responsible for emergency management must authorise approval for the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance.

### ***Motion 94***

*The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to take action to strengthen the delivery of social and affordable housing across Australia by:*

- 1. Preparing a National Housing Strategy*
- 2. The National Housing Strategy to encourage nationally consistent approaches to State and Territory Planning legislation to facilitate Inclusionary Zoning for Affordable Housing, as a tool that can be utilised by Governments and metropolitan and growth Councils (and any Councils where they so choose) to require affordable housing contributions as part of private development.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP)*

*This motion was moved by Darebin City Council*

### **Response**

The Australian Government understands housing is fundamental to the welfare of all Australians. Access to secure and affordable housing has significant economic and social benefits. Housing can improve education and health outcomes, increase workforce participation and reduce welfare dependency.

While state and territory governments (states) are responsible for the provision of day-to-day housing and homelessness services, in 2021-22 the Government expects to spend around

\$9.0 billion to help improve housing and homelessness outcomes. This includes an expected \$5.3 billion in Commonwealth Rent Assistance to help eligible Australians on welfare payments pay their rent and around \$1.6 billion through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) to state governments.

The NHHA commits funding each year to states to contribute to improving access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing, including to prevent and address homelessness, and to support social and economic participation. Decisions on how funding is allocated under the NHHA is the responsibility of states.

The Government has also established the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) to improve housing outcomes for all Australians. In addition to the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, the New Home Guarantee and the Family Home Guarantee, NHFIC also administers the Affordable Housing Bond Aggregator (AHBA) and the National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF).

The AHBA provides cheaper, long-term finance for community housing providers (CHPs), while the NHIF provides finance for critical infrastructure underpinning housing supply, particularly affordable housing. As at 30 June 2021, the NHFIC Board has approved over \$2.5 billion of loans to CHPs under the AHBA, supporting the delivery of more than 4,600 new social and affordable dwellings and refinancing over 8,300 existing dwellings; and over \$300 million in NHIF transactions supporting the delivery of more than 4,700 new social, affordable and market dwellings.

The NHIF offers eligible applicants concessional loans, grants and equity investments to finance the provision of critical infrastructure underpinning new housing supply, particularly affordable housing. In the 2017-18 Budget, the Government committed \$1 billion over five years for the operation of the NHIF, consisting of funding for concessional loans of \$600 million, equity investments of \$225 million and grants of \$175 million.

As at 30 June 2021, the NHFIC Board has approved over \$2.5 billion of loans to CHPs under the AHBA, supporting the delivery of more than 4,600 new social and affordable dwellings and refinancing over 8,300 existing dwellings; and over \$300 million in NHIF transactions supporting the delivery of more than 4,700 new social, affordable and market dwellings.

In November 2020, the Government commissioned an independent review into the operation of the NHFIC Act 2018 (the Review). The Review's terms of reference tasked it with considering the role of NHFIC in increasing housing supply, including NHFIC's ability to complement, leverage or support other Commonwealth, state activities relating to housing. The Review's report has been submitted to Government and the Government is considering its recommendations.

The Government is also contributing to the supply of housing by disposing of land that is no longer required by the Commonwealth, some of which is suitable for residential housing. In December 2017, the Government updated the Commonwealth Property Disposal Policy to require that any proposed sale of Commonwealth land that is suitable for housing should include affordable housing initiatives, where practical. At that time, the Australian Government also published the Australian Government Property Register, which enables all Australians to propose alternative uses for Commonwealth land.

On 27 February 2020, the Department of Defence completed the sale of Bulimba Barracks to Australian developer, Shayher Group. In April 2021, Shayher Group submitted its development proposal for the site to Brisbane City Council (Council). Subject to Council approval, future site development is expected to deliver up to 855 dwellings in alignment with the Bulimba Barracks Master Plan.

The Department of Defence continues to work with other Commonwealth agencies, including its City Deal Partners, to deliver divestment projects that are expected to support increased housing. This includes sites in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and Launceston.

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### ***Motion 95***

*The National General Assembly asks that all levels of government work together to investigate ways of making the delivery of affordable and accessible housing easier. We ask that the Federal Government consider:*

- a) investing more money into social housing,*
- b) reviewing the impact of current tax arrangements like negative gearing on housing affordability,*
- c) reviewing the effectiveness of rental assistance in its current form,*
- d) increasing the grant percentage of the National Housing and Infrastructure Finance Corporation finance from 20% to 50% to local councils,*
- e) implement a national RAPID program, supported by state and local governments to address homelessness,*
- f) where appropriate, donating crown land to be used for the provision of social and affordable housing,*
- g) changing policy and regulatory settings to better support and fund councils in addressing the affordable and accessible housing crisis in the Northern Rivers Region and other areas throughout the country. This could include enabling controls on existing housing that is kept empty for visitor accommodation, for example in Byron Shire, where approximately half the residential rental stock, over 3,500 properties, are listed, 80% whole houses and most are available year-round for short term holiday letting,*
- h) exploring supporting councils to directly facilitate development through planning, the provision of land and financial levels such as subsidies.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP)*

*This motion was moved by Byron Shire Council*

### **Response**

The Government recognises that access to secure and affordable housing has significant social and economic benefits. While state and territory governments are primarily responsible for housing policy, the Commonwealth Government expects to provide spend around \$9 billion in 2021-22 to improve housing outcomes. This includes an expected \$5.3 billion in Commonwealth Rent Assistance to help eligible Australians on welfare payments pay their rent and around \$1.6 billion a year through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) to state and territory governments.

The Government has also established the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) to improve housing outcomes for all Australians. In addition to the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, the New Home Guarantee and the Family Home Guarantee, NHFIC also administers the Affordable Housing Bond Aggregator (AHBA) and the National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF).

The AHBA provides cheaper, long-term finance for community housing providers (CHPs), while the NHIF provides finance for critical infrastructure underpinning housing supply, particularly affordable housing. As at 30 June 2021, the NHFIC Board has approved over

\$2.5 billion of loans to CHPs under the AHBA, supporting the delivery of more than 4,600 new social and affordable dwellings and refinancing over 8,300 existing dwellings; and over \$300 million in NHIF transactions supporting the delivery of more than 4,700 new social, affordable and market dwellings.

*Motion 95(d)*

The NHIF offers eligible applicants concessional loans, grants and equity investments to finance the provision of critical infrastructure underpinning new housing supply, particularly affordable housing. In the 2017-18 Budget, the Government committed \$1 billion over five years for the operation of the NHIF, consisting of funding for concessional loans of \$600 million, equity investments of \$225 million and grants of \$175 million.

As you may be aware, in November 2020 the Government commissioned an independent review into the operation of the NHFIC Act 2018 (the Review). The Review's terms of reference tasked it with considering the role of NHFIC in increasing housing supply, including NHFIC's ability to complement, leverage or support other Commonwealth, state or territory activities relating to housing.

The Review's report has been submitted to Government and the Government is considering its recommendations.

*Motion 95(f):*

The Government is actively contributing to the supply of housing by disposing of land that is suitable for residential housing and no longer required by the Commonwealth, beginning with surplus Defence land.

In December 2017, the Government updated the Commonwealth Property Disposal Policy to require affordable housing initiatives to be considered in the disposal of all Commonwealth land suitable for housing. At this time, the Australian Government also published the Australian Government Property Register which enables any entities to propose alternative uses for Commonwealth land.

On 27 February 2020, the Department of Defence completed the sale of Bulimba Barracks to Australian developer, Shayher Group. In April 2021, Shayher Group submitted its development proposal for the site to Brisbane City Council (Council). Subject to Council approval, future site development is expected to deliver up to 855 dwellings in alignment with the Bulimba Barracks Master Plan.

The Department of Defence continues to work with other Commonwealth agencies, including its City Deal Partners, to deliver divestment projects that are expected to support increased housing. This includes sites in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and Launceston.

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***Motion 96***

*That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to recommit to genuine partnership between three levels of Government in the City Deal model and commit resources to progress stalled negotiations; reconcile real progress against planned outcomes such as in the Western Sydney City Deal; and leverage the learnings from the current City Deals to inform improved and replicable models for future Deals.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Paul Fletcher MP)*

*This motion was moved by Liverpool City Council*

## **Response**

The Australian Government remains committed to working with its City Deal partners to ensure enduring tri-level governance throughout the lifetime of the City Deals. This commitment to tri-partite governance sets the framework for collaboration a focus on delivery.

Across all City Deals, the three levels of government are working together to align planning, investment and governance to accelerate growth and job creation, stimulate urban renewal and drive economic reforms.

As part of the governance arrangements for the Western Sydney City Deal a three-year evaluation is being undertaken in 2021 which will measure progress to date in delivery against City Deal commitments and inform the City Deal going forward.

### *Adelaide City Deal*

The Adelaide City Deal has grown from a \$549 million to a \$699 million Deal thanks to additional government investments in projects at Lot Fourteen. The Deal has also been successful in encouraging private sector investment at Lot Fourteen and Carrick Hill.

Deal governance is well established, with quarterly Implementation Board meetings, weekly officer-level meetings, and regular visits from the Australian Government officials to Adelaide to see the positive impacts of the Deal first hand.

### *Geelong City Deal*

The governance arrangements for the Geelong City Deal are well established with the Implementation Committee meeting on a six monthly basis. The Implementation Committee comprises senior officials from relevant Commonwealth and Victorian government departments and the City of Greater Geelong, and is supported by a number of project control groups, steering committees and working groups.

The Implementation Committee also meets with the Geelong City Deal Advisory Group on a regular basis. The Advisory Group comprises key regional and community representatives. The Group helps provide local knowledge and insight on issues arising in Geelong and the region and ensures the region's views and priorities are reflected in implementation of the City Deal.



**SENATOR THE HON JANE HUME**  
**MINISTER FOR SUPERANNUATION,**  
**FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY**  
**MINISTER FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY**

Ref: MC21-027610

Cr Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

**28 SEP 2021**

Dear Councillor Scott

Thank you for your correspondence concerning the payment of superannuation guarantee for local government representatives.

While the superannuation law does not automatically entitle a person who holds office as a member of a local government council to superannuation guarantee contributions, it does allow councils to bring themselves within the superannuation guarantee system if they wish to do so. Whether or not it is appropriate for a council to bring themselves within the superannuation guarantee system is ultimately a matter for that council.

State governments can also require the payment of superannuation for local government officials. I understand, for example, that the New South Wales Government enacted reforms earlier this year that would provide superannuation contributions for local government representatives. I therefore encourage you to engage with state governments on this issue.

I also note that local government council office bearers have the option to make personal deductible contributions to superannuation, in lieu of (or in addition to) any superannuation guarantee payments. These payments receive the same tax concessions as superannuation guarantee payments. The system includes an annual cap of \$27,500 on concessional (before tax) contributions, which includes both superannuation guarantee payments and personal deductible contributions. The annual concessional cap can be higher if the individual has unused concessional cap carry forward amounts and their balance is less than \$500,000. More information on personal deductible contributions to superannuation can be found on the Australian Taxation Office website: [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'JHume', written over a horizontal line.

Senator the Hon Jane Hume



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP  
Minister for Health and Aged Care**

Ref No: MC21-028740

Councillor Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600  
[alga@alga.asn.au](mailto:alga@alga.asn.au)

10 SEP 2021

Dear Councillor 

I refer to your correspondence of 10 August 2021 concerning the motions carried at the Australian Local Government Association's 2021 National General Assembly.

The Australian Government is taking a strong and decisive approach in responding to COVID-19, informed by the latest medical advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee and its expert standing committees, including the Public Health Laboratory Network and the Communicable Diseases Network Australia.

As described in the National Health Security Agreement, state and territory governments have primary operational responsibility for emergency management and public health in their respective jurisdictions. State and territory governments' actions are based on the medical advice from their respective Chief Health Officers.

State and territory governments' responsibility for on-the-ground measures has allowed an appropriate response adapted to each jurisdiction's local conditions and pandemic response stage. The specific measures imposed to control the spread of COVID-19 in each state and territory, enacted through local public health and emergency legislation, includes border closures, lock downs, quarantine, closing of non-essential businesses, and imposing requirements to wear personal protective equipment (such as face masks).

The Commonwealth Constitution contains one specific power which directly relates to public health, and that is the power to make laws in relation to quarantine. As such, the ability to quarantine travellers exists under either Commonwealth or state/territory legislation and may be exercised concurrently.

At the Commonwealth level, this is enacted through the *Biosecurity Act 2015 (Act)*. Under the Act, a range of powers exist for the managing and preventing the entry, establishment and spread of serious communicable diseases such as COVID-19.

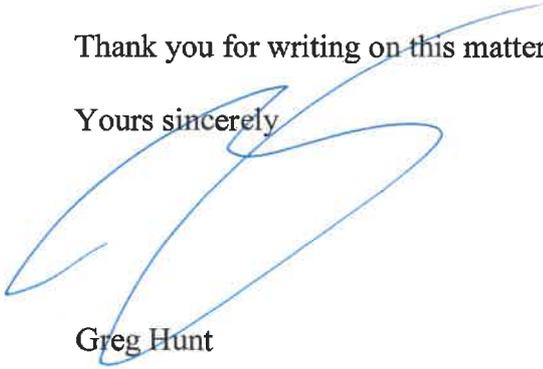
On 2 July 2021, National Cabinet agreed to a National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID Response from its pre-vaccination settings, focussing on continued suppression of community transmission, to the final phase of post-vaccination settings focussed on prevention of serious illness, hospitalisation and fatality.

This plan highlights the possibility of eased restrictions for vaccinated individuals in the event of community transmission prior to the final phase where public health measures may still be implemented by jurisdictions, such as lockdowns and border controls.

On 2 August 2021, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP announced the target vaccination levels that will enable the transition to Phase B and Phase C of the plan.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Greg Hunt', is written over the 'Yours sincerely' text. The signature is stylized and loops around the text.

Greg Hunt



**The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP**

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**Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development  
Leader of The Nationals  
Federal Member for New England**

Ref: MC21-007635

**29 OCT 2021**

Cr Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Cr Scott

Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2021 regarding motions from your recent National General Assembly.

I note you also wrote to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP, the Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Local Government; Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie MP, the Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience and the Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education; and the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts and they have responded separately about motions relating to their portfolios.

The past two years have not been easy, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which tragically destroyed lives and economies. Australia must be strong across all fields and infrastructure is a vital catalyst for economic recovery. I am working with the State and Northern Territory governments as Chair of the Rural and Regional Reform Committee of National Cabinet to ensure local governments have the skills and capabilities they need now and in the future. Local governments are on the ground, in the cities and regions, working for our citizens and communities, and they are a trusted partner for the Australian Government. We rely on local governments to deliver stimulus and infrastructure projects directly into the communities and to the citizens that need them.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and bringing to my attention the motions relevant to my portfolios.

Yours sincerely

Barnaby Joyce MP

### **Motion 10**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to introduce funding opportunities for regional airports to offset reductions in income due to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure regional communities are not further disadvantaged.*

*This motion was moved by Central Highlands Regional Council*

### **Response**

The Australian Government recognises the significant impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on airports and the aviation industry. The Government acted swiftly to respond, and has implemented several major support packages to support the industry through the crisis and assist economic recovery post COVID-19.

As part of this response, the Government has provided support for the costs of security screening at airports, including:

- the \$155.5 million Domestic Airports Security Costs Support program, to support domestic airports with security screening costs incurred from 29 March to 31 December 2021
- the \$66 million Regional Airports Screening Infrastructure program, to assist regional airports with the minimum necessary capital and initial operating costs of complying with enhanced security screening requirements.

Additionally, the Government has maintained a minimum level of connectivity to more than 110 regional and remote communities across Australia throughout the COVID-19 pandemic through the Regional Airline Network Support Program. To date more than 985,000 passengers have travelled on 45,000 RANS-supported flights since the program commenced in March 2020, ensuring there has been a continued baseline of activity at regional airports.

The Government also supports safety and access infrastructure works at regional and remote airports through the Regional Airports Program and the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program.

- On 28 July 2021, the Government announced 89 successful projects under round two of the Regional Airports Program worth \$29.6 million.
- On 4 May 2021, the Government announced 46 successful projects under round eight of the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program, worth \$8.2 million.

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### **Motion 73**

*That the National General Assembly advocate to the Federal Government, and in particular the Minister for Local Government, for an increase in the Financial Assistance Grant to support local governments to deliver a range of services including roads maintenance.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Mitchell Shire Council*

### **Response**

This motion will be responded to by the Hon Kevin Hogan MP, Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Local Government.

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#### **Motion 74**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with state/territory Local Government Grants Commissions across Australia, to ensure the allocation of federal road funding is distributed to local governments in accordance with the National Principles of horizontal equalisation as required by the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Wakefield Regional Council*

#### **Response**

This motion will be responded to by the Hon Kevin Hogan MP, Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Local Government.

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#### **Motion 75**

*The National General Assembly request that the Federal Government investigate a forward funding acquisition scheme that will enable local governments to provide infrastructure supporting the development of national assets; and that the investigation also consider funding opportunities through a value capture process or increased funds generated in the existing tax regime due to higher land values and transaction volumes associated with areas of major infrastructure delivery.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Liverpool City Council*

#### **Response**

The department is aware that value capture is being further considered by infrastructure bodies and all levels of governments in Australia. The department has negotiated value capture arrangements with the NSW Government for the Western Sydney Airport rail project.

There will be developments in value capture, including given recommendations from the NSW Productivity Commission for the NSW Government. The department will continue to review value capture opportunities as major projects are developed.

In 2014, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed the National Partnership Agreement on Asset Recycling (NPA). The NPA was a key feature of the Commonwealth Government's Infrastructure Growth Package, announced in the 2014-15 budget.

The objective of the NPA was to unlock funds from existing state-owned assets to invest in additional infrastructure. Asset recycling supports investment in additional infrastructure that will support economic growth and enhance productivity.

Clause 36 of the NPA states that a review must be completed by the Commonwealth approximately 12 months prior to its expiry (30 June 2019). In June 2018, a review of the NPA on asset recycling (the Review) was commissioned by the then Commonwealth Treasurer, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, to assess the degree to which the NPA objective and outcomes have been achieved and inform decisions regarding the appropriate treatment following its expiry. The review was published in January 2019.

Consultation with the states, territories and other stakeholders revealed that the NPA did assist in reducing infrastructure funding constraints for the jurisdictions that participated and were able to agree schedules with the Commonwealth before 30 June 2016 (New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory).

The NPA was influential in bringing forward assets for divestment. Commonwealth support for transactions meant that a reform package that included additional Commonwealth funding played a role in garnering additional community support. Further, the NPA provided an impetus for government decisions to be made.

By the time the NPA expired, in June 2019, the initiative was expected to provide \$2.3 billion in funding to the participating jurisdictions and unlocked over \$15 billion in additional economic infrastructure. The investment in additional infrastructure supported an increase in economic activity through increased construction activity and employment demand.

The NPA also had a role in bringing forward the timing of infrastructure investments. For some jurisdictions, the additional balance sheet capacity as a result of asset divestment allowed for investment in projects earlier than previously planned.

While it is too early to determine the precise impact on the productive capacity of the economy of the additional infrastructure, participants expressed a view that it had a positive influence on productive capacity.

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### **Motion 76**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to invest in nation building projects where it can be established, they will facilitate better road and transport connections between cities and with regions around Australia. The criteria for these projects should be based on the economic opportunities they create for freight and passenger movement, migration, service provision and business support, as these are known to contribute best to our national productivity. This motion has been developed in collaboration with the Lachlan Shire Council and will be submitted jointly.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Penrith City Council*

### **Response**

#### *Inland Rail*

Inland Rail is a key initiative of the Australian Government's \$110 billion infrastructure pipeline that includes major road and rail upgrades that will better connect regional communities to domestic and international markets. Inland Rail is a 1,700km freight rail line directly connecting Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It will provide cost-competitive and reliable freight transport with a transit time of under 24 hours, and also provide benefits such as economic stimulus, jobs support, reduced emissions and road safety outcomes.

Funded by the Australian Government, the project is being delivered by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), in partnership with the private sector. The project will build on existing regional and rural rail connections that provide access to the ports of Melbourne, Port Kembla, Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth via Parkes.

### Roads service level standards framework

In 2018, Infrastructure and Transport Ministers agreed to develop nationally consistent service level standards for all roads. A framework has been built for those standards, consisting of national road categories, customer service outcomes, and metrics on how to measure achievement of those outcomes. The framework will systematically ask (a) what is the function of each road and (b) what do customers value.

There are seven categories of road, reflecting a hierarchy across both social function (connecting communities) and economic function (enabling economic activity).

There are eight customer outcomes to capture the aspects of service road users value: travel time reliability and efficiency, accessibility, resilience, amenity/experience, place, safety, environment/health and being informed.

These national service level standards will provide road managers and road users all across Australia with new information they can use to inform investment decisions.

### Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme

Since 1976, the Australian Government has provided financial assistance through the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES) to reduce the added cost incurred by Tasmanian shippers of transporting eligible non-bulk goods moved by sea across the Bass Strait.

The objective of TFES is to provide Tasmanian industries with equal opportunities to compete in other markets, recognising that, unlike their mainland counterparts, Tasmanian shippers do not have the option of transporting goods interstate by road or rail.

Since 1996, the Australian Government has provided rebates for eligible passenger vehicles under the Bass Strait Passenger Vehicle Equalisation Scheme (BSPVES) to reduce the cost of sea travel between mainland Australia and Tasmania. Travellers that access the BSPVES consists of passengers who travel on holidays, for business and to visit family.

### Road Safety Program

The Australian Government has committed \$3 billion to road safety upgrades through the Road Safety Program—applying lifesaving road treatments where they are needed most. This program is funding a fast roll out of lifesaving road safety treatments on rural and regional roads and protection for vulnerable road users in urban/peri-urban areas. Projects underway on rural and regional roads are targeting road network safety gaps and aim to raise the safety standards on high-risk highways and arterial roads to a minimum 'three star rating' while urban and peri-urban projects are providing protection to vulnerable road users through interventions such as separated footpaths and cycleways. Further examples of projects being funded include upgrades to level crossings, to reduce conflicts between road vehicles and rail, and upgrades to facilities at heavy and light vehicle rest stops, encouraging drivers to take breaks on long journeys.

### Infrastructure Investment Program

The Australian Government is investing \$110 billion over 10 years from 2021-22 in land transport infrastructure across Australia through its rolling infrastructure pipeline, of which a substantial component is under the Infrastructure Investment Program (IIP).

As part of the IIP, the Australian Government is investing \$4.9 billion in the Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) initiative to help connect regional businesses to local and international markets, and better connect regional communities.

The Australian Government has increased investment in key freight routes, including \$1.4 billion for the Princes Highway corridor and \$591.6 million for Newell Highway Upgrades, to ensure a safer and more efficient road network for all Australians.

Significant upgrades also continue to be made to other key freight routes, including the North-South Corridor in South Australia and the Midland Highway in Tasmania. The final section of the Pacific Highway Upgrade in New South Wales opened to traffic in December 2020.

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**Motion 77**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a centrally funded aviation security mechanism that includes all airports providing domestic flights.*

*This motion was moved by Central Highlands Regional Council*

**Response**

The Australian Government considers that under a more normal aviation environment, commercial arrangements between airlines and airports on per passenger charges generate sufficient funding to meet the cost of security screening. However, the Government has recognised the significant impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the aviation sector and that reduced passenger volumes has limited the ability of airports to fully recover these costs. The Australian Government is providing \$155.5 million to the Domestic Airports Security Costs Support program to support the aviation sector and meet mandated security screening costs incurred from 29 March 2021 to 31 December 2021.

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**Motion 78**

*That the Federal Government ensures an adequate provision of charging points for electric vehicles in regional areas in order that regional areas are not deprived of the opportunity to purchase vehicles and also to ensure that people living in metropolitan areas can travel to regional and remote areas. Once the use of electric vehicles gains momentum, regional Australia should not miss out on tourism due to not having adequate charging bays.*

*(Motion also sent to The Hon. Michelle Landry MP)*

*This motion was moved by Broken Hill City Council*

**Response**

To support the uptake of electric and other low emissions vehicles, the Australian Government announced the Future Fuels Package on 17 September 2020, which will support jobs, strengthen our economy and reduce emissions through investments in new and emerging vehicle technologies.

The Package is a \$74.5 million investment to help consumers, businesses and communities take advantage of opportunities offered by new technologies, including hybrid vehicles, battery electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. It includes \$16.5 million to support battery electric vehicle fast charging stations across capital cities and key regional centres. This is in addition to the \$21 million already invested by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency for two major electric vehicle charging networks across Australia.

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## **Motion 79**

*That the National General Assembly call on the Federal and State Government to:*

- 1) Develop a clear long-term investment pathway for major social infrastructure and accompanying health, community and educational services in outer urban growth areas*
- 2) Call for an equitable and consistent allocation of funding announcements that focuses on emerging communities in outer urban growth areas*
- 3) Prioritise the planning and early funded delivery of community services and infrastructure in emerging communities, in order to avoid the costly, and often inadequate, retrofitting of emerging communities.*

*This motion was moved by Mitchell Shire Council*

## **Response**

### *Identification of priorities for urban growth areas and delivery of community services and infrastructure in emerging communities*

Local governments play an important role in the lives of citizens in the six Australian states and the Northern Territory. Local government authorities exist to provide services and amenities to local communities, and are also responsible for regulating and providing services for land and property in their district.

Local councils are the creatures of state/territory legislation, which stipulates the activities which the state or territory requires the local government to perform, as well as the functions it is allowed to perform if it chooses. The Australian Government works in consultation with states and territories to identify priority investments and, in the case of City Deals, this includes local government as well.

### *Major social infrastructure and accompanying health, community and educational services in outer urban growth areas*

#### City Deals

The Australian Government remains committed to working with its City Deal partners to ensure enduring tri-level governance throughout the lifetime of the City Deals. This commitment to tri-partite governance sets the framework for collaboration and a focus on delivery.

Across all City Deals, the three levels of government are working together to align planning, investment and governance of priority initiatives to accelerate growth and job creation, stimulate urban renewal and drive economic reforms. This includes the North and West Melbourne City Deal.

#### *Australian Infrastructure Plan*

Infrastructure Australia's 2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan includes a chapter on social infrastructure. This plan is an input to the Australian Government's infrastructure planning and can be accessed at [www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/2021-australian-infrastructure-plan](http://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/2021-australian-infrastructure-plan).

On 16 July 2021, Infrastructure Australia updated its Assessment Framework, which is used for assessing infrastructure proposals and for guiding Australian Government decisions on infrastructure investment. The previous framework focused on assessing the cost-benefit analysis of a project, prioritising urban infrastructure investment. The revised framework now explicitly recognises and promotes broader social factors alongside the cost-benefit analysis result. These changes will support proposals in regional and remote areas, as well as social infrastructure projects, which may not be economically viable when compared to urban projects, but achieve positive social outcomes.

In relation to points 2 and 3, funding for infrastructure projects is informed by state priorities and the Federal Budget is the mechanism through which funding allocations are decided.

#### Local Jobs Program

The Australian Government Local Jobs Program brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level to help job seekers connect to employment, reskilling and upskilling opportunities. Following the success of the initial Local Jobs Program, from 1 July 2021, the Program was expanded to cover all 51 employment regions across Australia and extended to 30 June 2025.

The Program has put in place Employment Facilitators in each region to support its delivery. The Facilitators play a brokerage role in each region by bringing together key stakeholders including employers, employment service providers, higher education and training organisations as well as all levels of government to work collaboratively to address the workforce priorities for the region.

#### The Local Recovery Fund

The Local Recovery Fund is available to support small scale initiatives that address the priorities identified within the region's Local Jobs Plan, supporting upskilling, reskilling and opportunities to meet local workforce needs.

In addition, the Local Recovery Fund Initiatives and National Priority Fund both support innovative solutions to address structural and other barriers with the goal of creating a more effective and efficient labour market for job seekers, employees, employers and the industry as a whole.

#### National Cabinet

To support the National Plan to Transition Australia's COVID-19 Response (the Plan), the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC), and its sub-committee the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA), is undertaking strategic discussions on reopening to provide advice to National Cabinet. This advice will cover how jurisdictions can modify their testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine (TTIQ) at different levels of vaccine coverage to ensure the public health response is as effective in future reopening phases. It will also cover how the current public health and social measures (PHSM), such as lockdowns, border closures and movement restrictions, can be eased in response to local and jurisdictional contexts, as Australia reopens.

Under current policy settings and current vaccine coverage, more stringent PHSMs have been rapidly implemented in response to a small number of COVID-19 cases. While based on the same principles, jurisdictions have applied different intensity and type of PHSM. Moving away from this approach will require careful consideration to not overwhelm the public health workforce capacity and health care system, including ICU.

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#### **Motion 97**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider the implementation of additional Regional Deals throughout the country.*

*This motion was moved by Northern Midlands Council*

#### **Response**

The Australian Government is delivering three pilot Regional Deals for regional Australia, in the Barkly, Hinkler and Albury-Wodonga regions.

The lessons learned through the implementation of these pilots are informing the development of collaborative policy to support regional Australia, such as the Regional Recovery Partnerships that were announced in the 2020-21 Budget.



## The Hon Michelle Landry MP

Assistant Minister for Children and Families

Assistant Minister for Regional Tourism

Federal Member for Capricornia

Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Telephone: 02 6277 4283

*MC21-001195*

Cr Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Councillor

Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2021 on the motion carried by the Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly regarding availability of electric vehicle charging stations in regional Australia.

The Australian Government is continuously monitoring emerging technologies such as electric vehicles and identifying the enabling infrastructure, planning and regulatory requirements to support consumer choice and uptake, as well as consideration of flow on benefits to regional Australia.

The Australian Government's \$71.9 million Future Fuels Fund will support businesses to integrate new technology vehicles into their fleets, and deliver battery charging and refuelling infrastructure across capital cities and key regional centres, helping to improve motorist confidence. The Future Fuels Fund is expanding Australia's fast charging network to help remove barriers to electric vehicle (EV) uptake.

The first round of the fund was announced on 30 July 2021 and is investing \$24.55 million in new public electric vehicle fast charging stations around Australia. Five companies will build a total of 403 stations, all powered by renewable energy.

This funding will accelerate the roll out of fast charging stations across all capital cities and key regional centres. Each regional location will receive a minimum of eight new stations. These regions will see a sevenfold increase in public charging stations. Later rounds of the fund will continue to increase regional EV charging capacity.

In emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, we have an opportunity to think bigger and longer term and to build a stronger visitor economy that is resilient, sustainable and profitable. Investment in enabling infrastructure for electric vehicles to support regional tourism was also raised by a number of stakeholders during the broad ranging consultations led by former Tourism Minister Martin Ferguson on Reimagining the Visitor Economy. Tourism infrastructure and investment will be critical to the Tourism 2030 strategy, which will emerge from these consultations and seeks to chart a course for sustainable long-term growth of the visitor economy.

The Government is committed to working with the tourism sector and the regions to support recovery, and with recovery will come renewed opportunities.

You may also be aware that the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) has recently commenced publishing a regular visitor economy newsletter to provide up to date information about government support programs and other news for tourism regions and businesses. To subscribe visit [www.austrade.gov.au/news/newsletters](http://www.austrade.gov.au/news/newsletters)

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. I trust this information will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely



**Michelle Landry MP**

17/9/2021



**THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP  
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
MEMBER FOR FARRER**

MC21-054108

Councillor Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

14 JAN 2022

[alga.@alga.asn.au](mailto:alga.@alga.asn.au)

Dear Councillor Scott

*Linda*

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 August 2021 concerning motions submitted for debate in the National General Assembly by member Councils of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) which relate to my portfolio responsibilities. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring this to my attention. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I acknowledge the crucial role of the ALGA in facilitating a forum for discussion on important issues of community concern and the significant contribution of the ALGA and its members in supporting Australians in metropolitan and regional areas.

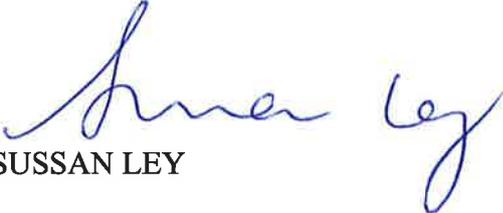
The Australian Government is keen to work with all levels of government. I am encouraged by the work of the ALGA and the representation of the interests of members of Local Government Councils around Australia. Many of these programs compliment the significant circular economy reforms and progress made by the government thus far.

This year the government will develop and release a new National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy – a roadmap for Australians to better understand, monitor and respond to the physical risks of our changing climate, based on the best available science and information. The strategy is being developed in consultation with all levels of government, business, community groups and experts. This government values the input received from ALGA to date to develop the strategy. I expect this close level of cooperation and consultation to continue.

I reinforce some of the work the government is doing, and will do, to address many of these motions and provide you with an update of the government's programs against each of the motions. As some motions fall outside the Commonwealth's realm and are administered at the state and territory level, I trust my state and territory minister counterparts will be able to provide more detailed information on these matters. Please see my response to the key areas of members' proposed motions in Attachment A.

Thank you again for writing to me on this matter and I hope this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



SUSSAN LEY

Enc

Cc Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management,  
the Hon Trevor Evans MP

**Motion related to funding and resources for circular economy capability building and support**

I am encouraged to see local governments seeking to build action plans and capacity to transition to circular economies, and I congratulate the Lake Macquarie City Council on their leading work in this space. While no federal funding is available to local governments for the development of circular economy plans, the Australian Government has made record investments in the waste and recycling industry and is building capacity for the circular economy by driving a \$1 billion transformation of our waste and recycling industry.

It is expected that over \$800 million dollars of new infrastructure all around Australia will be established through the Recycling Modernisation Fund which local governments are able to access. To advance Australia's circular economy the Australian Government has invested \$26 million in the National Product Stewardship Investment Fund. The fund has led to the establishment of Australia's first Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence as well as supported an additional 20 product stewardship projects which will service Australia. The government has also recently announced a Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund which will provide additional organics recycling infrastructure across Australia. Local governments can access this fund to build local capability.

I would encourage local governments developing circular economy action plans to consider the targets outlined in the National Action Plan and relevant state and territory plans, as well as opportunities highlighted in CSIRO's *Circular Economy Roadmap for Plastic, Glass, Paper and Tyres*.

**Motion related to the National Waste and Resource Recovery Working Group**

The Australian Government is committed to setting a sustainable path for Australia's recyclable waste. A national Resource Recovery Reference Group (RRRG) was established in 2020 to provide advice and help guide the implementation of the National Waste Policy Action Plan. This group includes representatives from government (including the Australian Local Government Association), industry and the not-for-profit sector. Environment Ministers have also agreed to work collaboratively to improve the harmonisation of municipal waste collection, including to develop a national implementation roadmap that will consider standards and specifications for municipal solid waste collection and recovery across Australia. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will continue to provide regular updates to local governments through ALGA, as this road map and associated recovered material standards and specifications are developed.

## **Motion related to Australian Government investment in conservation and land management stimulus package as part of the COVID-19 recovery**

The Australian Government is investing more than \$1 billion for the current phase of the National Landcare Program, being delivered from July 2017 to June 2023. The program is delivered in partnership with governments, industry, and communities to protect and conserve Australia's water, soil, plants, animals, and ecosystems, as well as to support the productive and sustainable use of these valuable resources.

There are around 6,000 groups, including Landcare groups, farming systems groups, and Indigenous land management groups across Australia supported directly or indirectly through the National Landcare program. This includes direct grants for on-ground conservation work as well as through partnerships with the 50 service providers across Australia under the \$450 million Regional Land Partnerships Program. This ongoing investment through the National Landcare Program plays a significant role in assisting regional communities recover from COVID-19, while at the same time contributing to the protection and improvement of our natural resources.

The National Landcare Program is complemented by other initiatives that invest in our local communities. In 2019–20, the Australian Government provided funding through the Communities Environment Program to approximately 108 local government entities for 218 projects with a combined value of \$3.2 million (GST excl.). The majority of these projects addressed habitat enhancement, revegetation and weed control.

## **Motions relating to urban forest strategies and impact of urban heat**

Local governments generally carry responsibility for urban forests planning and initiatives within their own jurisdictions, with some interaction with state planning controls. The Commonwealth Government may administer grant rounds, such as under the previous 20 Million Trees Programme, where urban forest projects may be eligible (noting the Commonwealth's responsibilities for environmental matters relate to matters of national environmental significance). The Environment Minister is typically responsible for such programmes, however the Cities and/or Urban Infrastructure Minister may also occasionally administer initiatives with relevance for urban forests.

### **Motion related to the Environmental Impact Statements of Major Projects assessed in accordance with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999**

Almost all major projects would also require state or territory approval through an environmental impact statement (EIS) process. In general, only one EIS would be prepared for purposes of both approvals. Providing capacity and resourcing for local governments to consider EIS for major projects, is largely a state and territory matter. If funding was provided, it should be targeted on matters related to matters of national environmental significance and in particular, providing local knowledge about species, World Heritage properties and Ramsar sites.

An independent review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) was conducted by Professor Graeme Samuel AC and completed in October 2020. The final report of the review is available [epbcactreview.environment.gov.au](http://epbcactreview.environment.gov.au). The Review did not make any recommendations to provide resources or funding to local governments to support reviewing Environmental Impact Statements for EPBC Act assessments. However, it made a range of recommendations to improve the operation of EPBC Act assessments and approvals. The Australian Government is adopting a staged program of reforms to the EPBC Act informed by the Review. This includes implementing single touch environmental approvals to reduce duplication in environmental assessment and approval processes.

### **Motion related to environmental impacts of artificial turf and environmentally appropriate alternatives for sporting surfaces**

The Australian Government's \$167 million Australian Recycling Investment Plan includes \$20 million for new product stewardship schemes. My Product Stewardship Priority List identifies products and materials considered to be most in need of a voluntary product stewardship approach. It is reviewed and updated every 12 months. In November this year, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will seek nominations from the public for items to be considered for inclusion on the 2022–23 list, which could be updated to include new products, such as artificial turf.

### **Motions related to National Waste and emissions reduction**

The National Waste Policy outlines the ambitious targets adopted by all of Australia's governments to reduce waste across Australia. The Australian Government provides national leadership to reduce Australia's waste generation and improve resource recovery rates through the *National Waste Policy Action Plan 2019* (the National Action Plan). The National Action Plan presents targets and actions to implement the *2018 National Waste Policy*, which was agreed by Australia's Environment Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association.

Matters relating to carbon emission, energy efficiency and investment fall under the responsibility of the Hon Angus Taylor, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction.

### **Motions related to climate change, adaptation and mitigation**

The Australian Government is providing national leadership on adaptation and building climate resilience for future generations. The Strategy, to be developed and released ahead of the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties in November this year, will provide a roadmap for Australians to better understand, monitor and respond to the physical risks of our changing climate, based on the best available science and information. The Strategy builds on the government's inaugural 2015 Strategy and reaffirms the agreement by the Council of Australian Governments' Select Council on Climate Change that all levels of government, businesses, communities and individuals have important, complementary and differentiated roles in adapting to the impacts of climate change. Recognising the strong synergies between climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction and resilience, the new Strategy will also complement and support the implementation of the detailed strategies in the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework.

All states and territories and many local governments now have some form of adaptation plan. The Australian Government looks forward to working in partnership with all levels of government, business, and the community, to implement the new Strategy and ensure it supports and reinforces existing actions and priorities.

### **Motion related to the environmentally and socially sustainable economy and society**

The Australian Government is adopting a staged program of reforms to Australia's national environmental law, the EPBC Act, to ensure it is fit for meeting the challenges facing our natural environment. On 16 June 2021, I released 'A pathway for reforming national environmental law' and a 'Proposed timeline for EPBC Act reforms' which together describe the priority reforms underway and the government's staged approach to reforming Australia's national environmental law. These documents will guide the government as it engages with stakeholders to deliver meaningful and enduring reform informed by the recommendations of the recent independent review of the EPBC Act conducted by Professor Graeme Samuel AC. These documents are available at: [environment.gov.au/epbc/about/environmental-law-reform](https://environment.gov.au/epbc/about/environmental-law-reform).

The government's first priority is to deliver single touch environmental approvals underpinned by national environmental standards and strong assurance. Single touch approvals will reduce duplication in environmental approval processes while new national environmental standards will add clarity about the environmental outcomes that these processes need to deliver. This will improve the operation of Australia's national environmental law and strengthen environmental outcomes. The government has further committed \$2.7 million to undertake a pilot regional plan for a priority development region to both help protect important environmental assets and give business greater certainty, and \$0.5 million to continue stakeholder engagement on modernising and strengthening the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage. Subsequent phases of reform will build on these important early steps, taking into account the recommendations of the EPBC Act Review.

### **Motion related to the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation**

Membership of the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) is voluntary. APCO reports on its memberships to Environment Ministers annually. Information about APCO memberships is also publicly available and can be found on the APCO website ([apco.org.au](http://apco.org.au)). Currently APCO has over 1500 members that represent the whole of the packaging supply chain.

Companies can choose to join APCO and report under the Australian Packaging Covenant to meet their obligations under the co-regulatory arrangement for managing used packaging, or they can report to the relevant state or territory government under legislation enacting the National Environment Protection (Used Packaging Materials) Measure 2011 (NEPM).

The Australian Government has recently undertaken an independent review of the Used Packaging NEPM and the Covenant and will be working with states and territories to respond to the review recommendations.



**The Hon Keith Pitt MP**  
**Minister for Resources and Water**

Ref: MC21-050867

Councillor Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600  
[alga.ea@alga.asn.au](mailto:alga.ea@alga.asn.au)

Dear Councillor Scott

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 August 2021 concerning resolutions from the 2021 National General Assembly of Local Government. I acknowledge the significant contribution the ALGA makes to public policy.

My response to the resolutions highlights several existing Australian Government initiatives, such as the \$3.5 billion National Water Grid Fund, the Murray–Darling Basin Plan and the \$269.6 million Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package.

The government is committed to supporting regional communities, including through the Communities Investment Package, which is putting communities and jobs back at the heart of the Basin Plan.

I look forward to ongoing engagement with the ALGA on matters relevant to my portfolio responsibilities.

Thank you again for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Pitt'.

Keith Pitt

18/9/2021

Enc. Response to ALGA motions

### Motion 29

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider a range of alternate water sources when determining the eligibility of projects under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund grants scheme in order to ensure water security for communities and industry across Australia. *This motion was moved by Lockyer Valley Regional Council*

- The Australian Government is investing \$3.5 billion through the National Water Grid Fund (NWGF), formerly the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. This investment supports Australia's agricultural and primary industry sectors, builds resilience and drives growth in regional economies. The National Water Grid Investment Framework sets out the objectives and eligibility criteria for investment through the NWGF. The National Water Grid Authority (NWGA) works closely with the states and territories to implement the Investment Framework. Further information on the Investment Framework and how local governments can work with state and territory governments is in the attached *Working in Partnership* factsheet or on the NWGA's website, [nationalwatergrid.gov.au](http://nationalwatergrid.gov.au).

### Motion 29.1

The National General Assembly calls on State/Commonwealth Governments to make funding available to develop innovative solutions for alternative water sources to provide for water security. *This motion was moved by Central Highlands Regional Council*

- As outlined in response to Motion 29, the Australian Government, through the NWGF, is investing in a range of water infrastructure solutions that are increasing water security and availability in regional Australia. The Investment Framework outlines that this can include investment in regional pilot projects, that seek to assess the merits of innovative water infrastructure solutions, where these also meet the objectives and eligibility criteria of the NWGF. Although the NWGA plays an important role in assisting governments with water infrastructure investments through the NWGF, the states and territories have primary responsibility in developing innovative solutions for alternative water sources to provide for water security.

### Motion 29.2

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal and State Governments to invest additional resources into the CSIRO and other research organisations to further improve available water purification technology, and then commit funding to establish water purification plants to help improve water security for communities. *This motion was moved by Tamworth City Council*

- State and territory governments have primary responsibility for regulating and managing Australian water resources. Local government also plays a crucial role in water management, particularly managing stormwater, and in some instances water supply and wastewater treatment. While the Australian Government is not directly responsible for the supply of water, it provides national coordination, leadership and support to make sure Australian water resources are sustainably managed.
- The CSIRO leads a range of wastewater treatment and water security research initiatives. For example, they are conducting research into bioreactor design and water banking in the Murray–Darling Basin to improve drought resilience.
- The motion has been provided to CSIRO for reference.

### **Motion 30**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government for a review on how low the environmental water allocation became and how we move to rectify this oversight. Motion was clarified to ask how the water recovery figure of 2,750 GL was arrived at, and what modelling or scientific basis the figure has. *This motion was moved by Mildura Rural City Council.*

- The Murray–Darling Basin Authority developed the *Murray–Darling Basin Plan 2012* to bring the Basin back to a healthier and sustainable level, while continuing to support farming and other industries for the benefit of the Australian community.
- The decision on the amount of water recovery required for a sustainable Basin was based on many lines of evidence, including environmental science, social and economic analysis, hydrologic modelling and community feedback from 2009 to 2012.
- Based on the available evidence, the MDBA recommended a Basin-wide recovery volume of 2,750 GL. This was adjusted in 2018 as a result of the Northern Basin Review and the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) projects that achieve equivalent environmental outcomes with a lower level of water recovery. The water recovery target to ‘bridge the gap’ to sustainable diversion limits is 2,075 GL.
- As of 30 June 2021, 2,106.9 GL of bridging the gap water has been recovered. While overall this is more than the 2,075 GL recovery target, there are some areas with individual catchment recovery targets that are not yet met – this means 46 GL remains to be recovered across the Basin to bridge the remaining gap to sustainable diversion limits.
- There is an additional target of 450 GL of recovery through investment in more efficient water infrastructure. More information is available on this program at <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/water/mdb/programs/basin-wide/off-farm-efficiency-program>

### **Motion 31**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal and State Governments to provide a funding stream aimed to tackle drought mitigation projects that will also provide positive outcomes for firefighting purposes and managing stock routes. *(Motion also sent to The Hon. David Littleproud MP)*

*This motion was moved by Central Highlands Regional Council*

- While my colleague the Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia, has responsibility for drought support measures, I can report on the On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme. On 20 April 2021, I announced that the current \$50 million rebate scheme would be extended by a further \$50 million Commonwealth contribution to 30 June 2021.
- The scheme helps farmers respond to current droughts as well as prepare for future droughts by providing rebates of up to 25% for activities such as installation of tanks and troughs associated with stock watering, water pumps and associated electronic systems to manage water delivery, desilting dams and drilling new stock water bores.
- All states have been provided with the opportunity to reopen the grants to new farmers and I am pleased to inform you that the Queensland Government is participating in the extension of the scheme. Further information is available at [agriculture.gov.au/water/national/on-farm-infrastructure-rebate](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/water/national/on-farm-infrastructure-rebate).

**Motion 32**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to protect national food security and the sustainability of regional irrigation communities by:

1. acknowledging irrigation communities were purposefully built by governments to feed and drought-proof the nation
2. acknowledging the unintended adverse impacts on regional communities of certain water policy decisions and the operation of water trading markets
3. acknowledging that the nation's primary producers are adept at using water efficiently and responsibly
4. providing enhanced water access for general security water holders in regional communities who depend on the availability of this water for their livelihoods
5. ensuring decisions foster diversity in agriculture and value adding industries
6. reviewing and adjusting timelines for the completion of Murray-Darling Basin projects and plans such as the Murray–Darling Basin Plan Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Measures (SDLAM) Projects and Water Sharing Plans.

(Motion also sent to The Hon David Littleproud MP)

*This motion was moved by Leeton Shire Council*

- Irrigated agriculture and irrigation communities have played, and continue to play, a significant role in the Australian economy. Australia's irrigators are among the most efficient in the world. Australia proudly promotes the achievements of our farmers on the world stage.
- Water trading offers flexibility to water users including irrigators to buy and sell water when they need to. This helps them adjust to changes in water availability, agricultural inputs and commodity markets. To help ensure water markets do not have unintended adverse impacts, including on regional communities, the Australian Government commissioned the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to conduct an independent inquiry into water markets, and is now working with Basin states to consider the ACCC's recommendations and agree on a practical approach to water market reform.
- While water allocation frameworks remain the responsibility of Basin states, the Australian Government has funded transparency initiatives to improve stakeholders' access to water information, including information about allocations and how allocation policies work.
- I am committed to putting communities and jobs at the heart of the Basin Plan. On 4 September 2020 I announced the \$269.6 million Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package as well as the commitment of no more buybacks. The investment package outlines the Australian Government's refreshed approach and commitment to the Basin Plan – it's designed to stimulate long-term, sustainable economic growth and to promote innovative ways to deliver water recovery that supports Basin irrigation communities.
- There are three years left to run to the Basin Plan's 2024 date for the implementation of the Sustainable Diversion Limit adjustment mechanism projects. My focus is on getting these projects underway on-ground to help communities, industries, and the environment. These projects will keep 605 GL of water in productive use and jobs in regional communities.



## Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie

Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience  
Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education  
Leader of the Nationals in the Senate  
Senator for Victoria

Ref No: MC21-007537

Cr Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
Via [alga.ea@alga.asn.au](mailto:alga.ea@alga.asn.au)

22 NOV 2021

Dear Cr Scott *Linda*

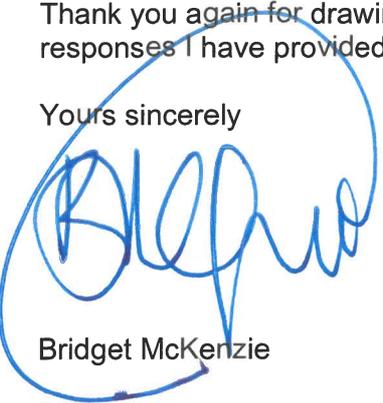
Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2021, regarding motions from your National General Assembly held in June. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I note you also wrote to the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development; the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts; and the Hon Kevin Hogan MP, Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Local Government. They have responded separately about motions relating to their portfolios.

I add my voice to that of my colleagues in thanking the Australian Local Government Association for your unflagging advocacy for local governments. Through the challenges of the last two years, councils have tirelessly supported their communities through drought, bushfires, floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Australian Local Government Association's continued contribution to the national efforts to help those affected individuals and communities, and its commitment to build a more resilient Australia for the future, is appreciated.

Thank you again for drawing my attention to the motions in my portfolios. I trust the responses I have provided are of assistance.

Yours sincerely

  
Bridget McKenzie

Enc

## **Motion 12**

*That this National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to address the economic hardship people in rural and regional areas are experiencing due to the unique combined impacts of COVID-19, unprecedented bushfires, long running drought and/or flooding by providing additional support for recovery.*

*That this relief include:*

- a) Initiatives targeting the tourism and creative industries*
- b) an evaluation of and response to the youth and gender impacts of COVID-19*
- c) initiatives that will boost jobs and long-term community resilience to climate*
- d) restoration of funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Bendigo City Council*

## **Response**

- a) The Australian Government is funding a number of initiatives that support the tourism and creative industries including:

### *Adelaide City Deal*

The Adelaide City Deal is a 10-year agreement between the Australian Government, the Government of South Australia and the City of Adelaide to grow Adelaide as an innovative and vibrant city. Governments are working together to deliver projects and initiatives that support the growth of businesses and jobs, encourage the growth of Adelaide's population, and build on the city's global reputation in the arts and culture.

The Adelaide City Deal is supporting COVID-19 and disaster recovery through initiatives that target tourism and creative industries as summarised below.

### *Aboriginal Art and Cultures Centre (\$200 million)*

The Aboriginal Art and Cultures Centre at Lot Fourteen will showcase the rich, diverse and enduring cultures of Australia's First Nations Peoples and attract people from across South Australia, Australia and internationally. Jobs will be created throughout the construction and operational phases across the arts, business and utilities sectors.

### *The Heysen Gallery in Hahndorf (\$9 million)*

The new Heysen Gallery in Hahndorf will be a dedicated space to display art by renowned Australian artists Hans and Nora Heysen, as well other Australian and international exhibitions. The Gallery will attract local, Australian and international visitors and create local jobs throughout construction and in the longer term operations of the Gallery.

### *Carrick Hill Visitors Pavilion (\$3 million)*

The visitor pavilion at the historic Carrick Hill House will provide an enhanced visitor experience for people visiting the historic Carrick Hill house and nearby Yurrebilla and Max Holbrook Trails. The pavilion will house a restaurant, cafe, function centre and gift shop. Local jobs will be created both throughout the construction and ongoing operations of the pavilion and the retail and hospitality premises.

### *Geelong City Deal*

Signed in March 2019, the \$382.48 million Geelong City Deal is a 10-year partnership between the three levels of Government. The funding comprises \$183.8 million Australian Government; \$174.2 million Victorian Government; \$10.28 million City of Greater Geelong; and includes \$12.25 million from other funding contributors.

Geelong and the Great Ocean Road region are domestic and international tourism destinations, and the Geelong City Deal investment will encourage returning visitors to dedicate more time to exploring the region and help support the region's transitioning economy. Implementation of the City Deal is contributing to economic diversification and jobs growth, supporting innovation and building on emerging industry strengths for Geelong and the Great Ocean Road region. Some of the key projects targeting the tourism industry, while creating employment opportunities across the Geelong region, are summarised below.

#### *Queenscliff Ferry Terminal (\$15.9 million)*

The development of a new ferry terminal at Queenscliff offers significant benefits to visitors, including safer access for pedestrians, high quality experiences and improved disability access. The terminal will deliver new jobs in the construction phase, and a major economic boost for the region. Construction of the terminal building has commenced.

#### *Great Ocean Road Infrastructure Projects*

A number of key projects along the Great Ocean Road will help support growth in the visitor economy through strengthening the region as a leading tourism destination:

- Redevelopment of Apollo Bay Harbour (\$12 million)
- Apollo Bay to Skenes Creek Coastal Trail (\$5 million)
- Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River (\$1.9 million)

#### *Priority Projects under the Shipwreck Coast Masterplan - Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment (\$108.15 million)*

This commitment includes development of a new Visitor Experience Centre, park and ride facility, transport access entry road, landscaping works and walking trails, and a range of priority coastal works. The project includes \$23.4 million funding to support business enablement and activate private investment opportunities along the Shipwreck Coast through the establishment of a grants process to administer a Private Sector Business Enablement Fund.

#### *b) An evaluation of and response to the youth and gender impacts of COVID-19*

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency provides a monthly update on new and emerging data as research evolves on the impacts of COVID-19. Additional information is available at: [www.wgea.gov.au/publications/gendered-impact-of-covid-19](http://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/gendered-impact-of-covid-19).

The Office for Women administers the Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP), to fund and deliver a range of projects for Australian Women. The program contributes to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Outcome 1. The objective of the WLDP is to improve outcomes for Australian women in six key priority areas:

- Women's Job Creation
- Women's Economic Security
- Women's Workforce Participation
- Women's Leadership
- Women's Safety
- International Engagement

There are two grant funding streams under the WLDP:

1. The WLDP Project Grants stream supports a range of projects that achieve tangible improvements in outcomes for Australian women linked to the Australian Government's six key priority areas. Grant opportunities under this stream are for projects that contribute to the achievement of all, one, or a combination of the six key priority areas listed above.
2. The National Women's Alliances stream supports a grant opportunity to fund the formation of six civil society networks, known as National Women's Alliances, to ensure that women's voices are heard in the policymaking process.

Further information on addressing gendered impacts can be found on the Office for Women website at [www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/grants-and-funding](http://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/grants-and-funding).

Supporting youth mental health is a key priority of the Australian Government. Headspace is the Australian Government's flagship program for provision of services to young people aged 12-25 experiencing, or at risk, of mild to moderate mental illness. As part of the 2021-22 Budget, the Australian Government is expanding the headspace network, with funding of \$278.6 million over the next four years. This includes establishing ten new headspace centres and upgrading five satellite services, bringing the total number of headspace services across Australia to 164 by 2025-26.

The Australian Government funds Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to plan and commission regionally appropriate mental health and suicide prevention services within a person-centred stepped care approach that matches services to local need, including headspace. The Department of Health works closely with the headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation and PHNs to ensure that young Australians continue to have access to mental health services where and when they need it. For those young people unable to attend a physical headspace service, headspace provides free, telephone and web-based support services to young people aged 12-25 years with, or at risk of developing mental illness.

The Australian Government is committed to closing care gaps in rural, regional and remote Australia by increasing the availability of services, including digital and telehealth services. The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (Plan) outlines what the Australian Government is doing to support rural, regional and remote Australia, including increasing access to youth mental health services and boosting the workforce.

c) *Initiatives that will boost jobs and long-term community resilience to climate*

On 5 May 2021, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, announced that \$600 million would be available over six years from 2021-22 to 2026-27 for the Preparing Australia Program.

The Preparing Australia Program will support projects that mitigate or reduce the disaster risk, impact and consequence associated with large-scale natural hazards.

Managing and reducing risk is key to limiting the impacts of disasters, and risk reduction was a focus of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, which can be found at <https://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/royal-commission-national-natural-disaster-arrangements-report>.

Managing risk means knowing what could happen, and putting measures in place to reduce the impacts.

The objectives of the Preparing Australia Program are to:

- improve the long-term resilience of Australian communities and households to natural hazards including bushfires, floods and tropical cyclones
- deliver disaster risk reduction projects that reduce hazard exposure or vulnerability and are aligned with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework.

The Preparing Australian Communities Program (PACP) Local stream will support disaster risk reduction and resilience initiatives that will reduce the impact of future natural hazards on Australian communities.

A total of \$150 million is available from 2021-22 to 2024-25.

The PACP Local will open for applications on **10 December 2021**, and close at **5pm AEDT on 6 January 2022** to ensure communities can commence their projects ahead of the next high risk weather season.

The Australian Government supports measures for an environmentally and socially sustainable economy and society. The Australian Government has invested in measures that promote environmental sustainability, such as the Indigenous Rangers Program and Indigenous Protected Areas Program.

Additionally, in the 2021-22 Budget, the Australian Government announced a commitment to develop a new Indigenous Skills and Employment Program to replace existing programs from 1 July 2022. It will contribute to closing the gap in employment by supporting pathways to meaningful and sustainable employment for Indigenous Australians, through flexible, locally informed investment.

The Indigenous Skills and Employment Program will increase economic opportunities for Indigenous Australians and drive actions that connect Indigenous Australians to jobs, targeted skills acquisition and career advancement opportunities. The program will be co-designed with Indigenous Australians, in consultation with key stakeholders.

### *COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Fund*

In March 2020, the Australian Government established a \$1 billion COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Fund to support regions, communities and industry sectors that have been disproportionately affected by the Coronavirus crisis. The initiatives announced under the Fund are supporting industries including aviation, agriculture, fisheries, tourism and the arts.

Support has been tailored to meet the needs of communities and industries that needed assistance during the crisis and into recovery. This includes:

- fee or levy relief - applied through existing mechanisms, requiring little or no action by businesses;
- increasing payments through existing grant programs - in ways that are quick and simple to deliver; or
- establishing targeted new programs to support the particular needs of an industry sector.

Further information on the initiatives that are currently part of the fund can be found at [www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regions/regional-community-programs/covid-19-relief-recovery-fund](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regions/regional-community-programs/covid-19-relief-recovery-fund).

Under this funding, the Australian Government has committed \$100 million over two years to fund Regional Recovery Partnerships in 10 regions across Australia. The Partnerships coordinate investments with all levels of government to support recovery and growth, delivering jobs and economic diversification in line with regional priorities.

The 10 regions are:

- The Snowy Mountains; Hunter and Newcastle; and Parkes Regions (NSW);
- Cairns and Tropical North Queensland; Gladstone; and Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday Regions (QLD);
- All of Tasmania;
- Gippsland Region (VIC);
- Kangaroo Island (SA); and
- South West Region of WA.

Further information on the projects funded under the Partnership can be found at [www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regions/regional-recovery-partnerships](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regions/regional-recovery-partnerships).

### *Future Drought Fund*

Strong rural communities are a critical underpinning for the drought resilience of Australian agriculture. The Australian Government is investing an additional \$8 million to 2023-24 in building community leaders, mentors, organisations and networks to drive action on drought resilience and support their community in tough times. This additional funding builds on \$11.2 million of existing investment.

The Australian Government's \$5 billion Future Drought Fund (FDF) is about building drought resilience; helping farmers and regional communities become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought.

Building social capital is a critical underpinning. It is the community leaders, mentors, organisations and networks in farming communities that drive change and help people when times get tough. This support includes two programs that focus on leadership and networks in rural and regional communities:

*Drought Resilience Leaders program*

The Australian Government has partnered with the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation to develop a cohort of drought resilient leaders, and mentoring networks, across Australia. Additional funding of \$4 million adds to \$7.45 million already invested. That existing investment targets the development of a cohort of at least 480 future leaders across 12 regions, and mentoring network of 250 mentors and 300 mentees.

Applications to participate in the Leadership Development program for the second of two pilot regions are now underway. Applications across the remaining 10 regions opened in October 2021.

Applications for the Drought Resilience Mentoring program opened on 21 July 2021 for the program to commence in January 2022. Targeting of the additional funding will be informed by feedback and lessons learnt from the existing investment.

*Networks to Build Drought Resilience program*

The Australian Government has partnered with the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal to provide small-scale grants for community organisations, networks and infrastructure that supports drought resilience. Additional funding of \$4 million adds to \$3.75 million already invested. That existing investment will support two grant rounds, with the first of which opened in May 2021.

Targeting of the additional funding will be informed by feedback and lessons learnt from the existing investment. For more information, see the Future Drought Fund at [www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/future-drought-fund](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/future-drought-fund).

*The Drought Communities Programme - Extension*

The extension of the Drought Communities Programme, which closed in January 2020, provided funding of \$301 million to eligible councils for drought-affected regions of Australia. The program supports local community infrastructure and other drought relief projects for communities impacted by drought.

The programme provided councils with up to either \$1million or \$500,000 per announcement for drought relief projects. Funding targeted projects that:

- provided work for people whose employment has been impacted by drought
- stimulated local community spending
- use local resources, businesses and suppliers
- provided a long-lasting benefit to communities and the agricultural industries they depend on.

d) *restoration of funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue*

This motion has been referred to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP, Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Local Government.

### **Motion 12.1**

*That the National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to provide additional direct funding to significantly impacted local government bodies from 2020 to support ongoing recovery efforts which are well in excess of regional and rural councils being able to address.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Bega Valley Shire Council*

### **Response**

Under Australian governance arrangements, states and territory governments (the states) have primary responsibility for responding to natural disasters, including providing assistance to disaster-affected communities. The Australian Government provides support to the states through the jointly-funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to assist with the costs of providing certain relief and recovery assistance to disaster-affected communities.

The DRFA is authorised by the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations. Under this Agreement, the Australian Government can only provide funding directly to the states. While the DRFA can facilitate funding to local governments for a range of relief and recovery activities, including the establishment of evacuation and recovery centres, certain counter disaster operations and the restoration of damaged public assets, this is appropriately done in consultation with the states.

If disaster-affected local governments have significant ongoing recovery needs that have not been addressed following a disaster, they should liaise directly with their state to determine whether a request for additional joint Commonwealth-state DRFA support is appropriate.

The Commonwealth is also investing in disaster preparedness, to mitigate the risks of future natural disasters. This includes programs such as the \$600 million Preparing Australia Program, which aims to limit the impact of future disasters through both public and private risk reduction.

The Australian Government provided \$62 million in payments to local councils under the LGA Grants Program following the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires, to assist the most severely impacted Local Government Areas to quickly rebuild vital infrastructure and strengthen community resilience.

The Local Economic Recovery (LER) funding implemented in response to the Black Summer bushfires is also delivering up to \$700 million (co-funded with the states) supporting the locally-led medium and long term social and economic recovery needs of communities. To date, \$303.8 million (\$607.6 million including state contributions) in community projects have been announced that are bringing economic, social and other benefits to communities, improving infrastructure, creating jobs, supporting local needs, attracting visitors and helping key local industries. Approximately 40 per cent of LER project funding is going to local councils to fund Council-sponsored projects.

The Australian Government has also committed to Phase 3 of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program. An additional \$1 billion announced in the 2021-22 budget will continue to boost Australia's economic recovery. This brings the total Australian Government commitment to the LRCI Program to \$2.5 billion.

This program supports local councils to deliver priority local road and community infrastructure projects across Australia, supporting jobs and the resilience of local economies to help communities bounce back from COVID-19. LRCI Program Phase 3 will continue to support local jobs and businesses at the time it is needed most.

From 1 January 2022, councils will be able to access funding through LRCI Program Phase 3, with projects under the Program to be delivered by 30 June 2023.

The intent of the LRCI program is to provide additional stimulus funding to Eligible Funding Recipients in order to complete infrastructure projects which are additional to projects that they had already planned to undertake using their own funds.

The Australian Government calls on ALGA to support its members to access these direct funding opportunities, particularly those members in regional and rural areas.

#### **Motion 14**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to release the \$4 billion in unallocated Emergency Response Funds to the 537 State and Territory Local Government Councils across the nation to increase local community capacity to implement sustainable and effective community disaster recovery, preparedness, and resilience initiatives.*

*This motion was moved by Bellingen Shire Council*

#### **Response**

The Emergency Response Fund (ERF), established on commencement of the Emergency Response Fund Act 2019 (ERF Act) on 12 December 2019, is designed as a dedicated, sustainable investment fund. The ERF is managed by the Future Fund Board of Guardians with the objective that the ERF grows over time as a valuable resource for future natural disaster resilience and recovery measures in Australia.

Each financial year, the Australian Government may draw up to \$50 million for pre-disaster resilience or preparedness measures, and, in exceptional circumstances up to \$150 million from the ERF for emergency response and natural disaster recovery measures. The Australian Government will access this fund in the event that existing recovery and resilience programs are insufficient to provide an appropriate response to natural disasters.

The Australian Government has established a 'Building Resilient Regional Leaders Initiative (Pilot)' administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications which was announced in the 2020-21 Budget. The pilot program will provide funding to organisations that will deliver place-based training to regional leaders to build capability to better achieve community resiliency and support recovery from disasters and associated economic impacts (COVID-19, flood, bushfires, cyclones, etc). The program objective is to build capability through a localised leadership cadre that will contribute to regional resilience over time. Applications for the program opened on 24 September 2021 and closed on 5 November 2021.

As part of the 2020–21 Budget, the Australian Government announced \$20 million allocated over four years to support locally-led recovery and resilience activities under the Recovery and Resilience Program, including \$857,000 under stream 1. Successful projects put forward a focus on locally-led initiatives to strengthen community hubs and building resilient facilities, ensuring water supply, and creating jobs throughout the region. As part of the same Budget package, \$12 million in grants were made available to improve disaster risk management planning and mitigation activities in the 14 most flood-affected Local Government Areas in Northern Queensland impacted by the 2019 monsoon trough.

On 4 May 2021, the Australian Government announced its plans for More Affordable Access to Insurance for Northern Australians thanks to the establishment of a Reinsurance Pool. This announcement included the Reinsurance Pool being delivered by the Treasury to cover cyclone and related flood damage in northern Australia backed by a \$10 billion Australian Government guarantee. Included in the Reinsurance Pool is the \$40 million for the North Queensland Strata Title Resilience Pilot Program (the Pilot) to commence in early 2022. The Pilot is a capped, three-year program to subsidise the cost of cyclone risk mitigation works for eligible strata title properties (residential and mixed use residential) in North Queensland. The focus is on providing funding to support strata title properties in North Queensland to undertake disaster mitigation works to improve resilience, with an aim to pilot options to achieve reduced insurance premiums through risk mitigation works.

### **Motion 15**

*That the National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to audit, report on, and hasten financial relief to those who have applied for bushfire relief.*

*This motion was moved by Bega Valley Shire Council*

### **Response**

Australian Government funding has substantially contributed to the recovery of communities from the devastating 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires. So far, \$2.4 billion of the \$2.8 billion in Commonwealth funding made available for recovery has been delivered. This includes \$1.7 billion from the \$2 billion National Bushfire Recovery Fund (NBRF).

On 24 April 2021, the Australian Government announced the establishment of the \$280 million Black Summer Bushfire Recovery grants under the NBRF to help address recovery needs not yet supported under other programs. Other NBRF programs continue to support medium and longer term recovery needs, including the \$350 million Local Economic Recovery projects (with Australian Government contributions cost-matched by the states), supporting 399 already announced projects across the most highly impacted LGAs at \$303.8 million (\$607.6 million including state contributions).

The National Recovery and Resilience Agency is preparing an evaluation of the \$2 billion NBRF, noting that key programs under the NBRF such as the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery grants and Local Economic Recovery funding are still underway.

For NBRF funding delivered through state governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), which are also subject to standard DRFA acquittal processes, state governments may undertake their own evaluations of program and activity expenditure.

### **Motion 16**

*That this National General Assembly of Local Government call on the Commonwealth and states and Territory Governments to ensure that ALGA, State Associations and local Councils are appropriately represented on advisory groups and projects linked to the new National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency being established by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to ensure that both local government local and community voices are heard in the important work that will be led by this agency.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Bega Valley Shire Council*

## **Response**

The National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency (NRRRA) supports the vital role that ALGA, and each local government plays in supporting preparedness and recovery from natural disasters. Local Governments are at the forefront of the impacts of natural hazards, supporting community events, infrastructure and recovery and building community resilience.

The NRRRA has a dedicated Local Government Adviser who reports directly to the Coordinator General. The Advisory Board that supports the Agency includes a range of leading industry, government and local government advocates. The NRRRA also has a network of embedded Recovery Support Officers (RSOs) who work closely with local governments, industry and community groups to support recovery and resilience activities. The RSOs ensure local voices are represented in decision making and policy and programs are adapted to suit local conditions.

The NRRRA recognises and values ALGA and its members as key stakeholders, engaging ALGA and members on a number of initiatives including the Preparing Australia Program, representation on the Steering Committee to develop a National Recovery Training program, Advisory Group position on the National Recovery Exercising program and through engagement on the National Disaster Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework and Mental Health National Action Plan for First Responders.

The NRRRA will also be engaging with relevant local government members to establish Pilot Regional Resilience Hubs to host Commonwealth, state and local government officials and non-government stakeholders to build resilience and recovery capabilities in regional communities.

NRRRA will continue to engage ALGA and its members regularly and welcomes the advice and guidance of ALGA and member organisation in supporting recovery and resilience activities.

## **Motion 18**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to include a 'pandemic' under the definition of an 'eligible disaster' under the Disaster Recover Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Guidelines to enable local government costs to be claimed in line with other 'disaster' events.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Balonne Shire Council*

## **Response**

Under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018 (DRFA), a natural disaster is defined as 'one, or a combination of the following rapid onset events: bushfire; earthquake; flood; storm; cyclone; storm surge; landslide; tsunami; meteorite strike or tornado'. Health responses to infectious disease outbreaks are not covered under the DRFA. Instead, the Australian Government is working directly with all jurisdictions to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated health and economic response to COVID-19.

### **Motion 36**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide employment opportunities nationwide to support Cultural Burning (Indigenous fire management) as a resilience strategy. This would take the form of a core jobs program, amalgamated with conservation management.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP)*

*This motion was moved by Shoalhaven City Council*

### **Response**

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) works closely with Indigenous land managers, funding 129 Indigenous ranger groups across Australia to manage natural and cultural values of Country, including fire management. The Indigenous Rangers Program provides jobs for around 1,900 Indigenous Australians each year. NIAA and the Commonwealth's Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) also support Traditional Owners to manage more than 74 million hectares of land under the Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) program. Indigenous rangers and IPA managers undertake fire management as part of their regular activities for a range of benefits including natural disaster resilience on Indigenous and state held land.

In addition, as the Indigenous Skills and Employment program will be a flexible, locally informed program, there is nothing that would preclude a conservation management initiative being considered under the program in future if that was a priority supported by the region.

### **Motion 36.1**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to include 'cultural burns' as a means of bushfire management within the National Natural Disasters Arrangements report by the Royal Commission.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP)*

*This motion was moved by Willoughby City Council*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports in principle the below Royal Commission on National Natural Disaster Arrangement recommendations:

- Recommendation 18.1-Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience; that Australian, state, territory and local governments should engage further with Traditional Owners to explore the relationship between Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience and
- Recommendation 18.2-Indigenous land and fire management and public land management; that governments should explore further opportunities to leverage Indigenous land and fire management insights, in the development, planning and execution of public land management activities.

The NIAA works closely through the Indigenous Rangers Program with Indigenous land managers on fire management.

In addition, the Australian Government's National Bushfire Recovery Fund provides \$2 million to empower Traditional Owners to share knowledge and build understanding of traditional Indigenous fire management practices, as part of the \$149.7 million support for native wildlife and habitat restoration following the 2019-20 fires.

Also, under the Australian Government's \$200 million Bushfire Recovery Regional Fund, funding of more than \$9.5 million has been provided for Traditional Owner-led activities, including cultural burning, through Natural Resource Management organisations and state governments.

In addition, a robust 18-month co-design process to develop proposals for Local and Regional Voices and a National Voice has recently concluded. Co-design groups, made up of 52 members from around the country, have led this process to design the detail of an Indigenous Voice and over 9,400 people have had their say on the proposals.

Consultation feedback strongly supported an Indigenous Voice at both local and regional and national levels, as well as a notion of an approach for Local & Regional Voices that would see them providing advice to and working in partnership with all levels of government, including local governments.

The report is significant and comprehensively details the proposals and the deliberations of the co-design process, and it deserves thorough consideration by the Australian Government. The importance of this report and what it means for Indigenous Australians means it is too important to rush this consideration process.

I encourage your members to read the submissions and summaries from the consultations online at [www.voice.niaa.gov.au](http://www.voice.niaa.gov.au). There is also information about the co-design process, Indigenous Voice proposals and the co-design Interim Report.

### ***Motion 36.2***

*That the National General Assembly advocate for Federal support and funding of relevant Indigenous agencies to put in place bushfire hazard reduction 'cool burns'.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP)  
This motion was moved by Bega Valley Shire Council*

### **Response**

Please refer to the response to Motion 36.1.

### ***Motion 63***

*That this National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Australian Government to urgently implement Recommendations 1 and 2 of The Senate Economics Reference Committee December 2020 Final Report on the Inquiry into the indicators of, and impact of, regional inequality in Australia. Recommendation 1 recommends the Australian Government fundamentally re-examine its regional infrastructure spending plan and make an expanded infrastructure programme the basis for its stimulus plan for Australia's economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19; and Recommendation 2 recommends, in order to achieve the most appropriate response for regional investment, the Australian Government undertake a series of round table consultations with:*

- Commonwealth departments and agencies;*
- State and local governments;*
- Regional associations; and*
- Community organisations.*

*This motion was moved by Isaac Regional Council*

## **Response**

The Senate Economics References Committee released the final report of its Inquiry into the indicators of, and impact of, regional inequality in Australia in December 2020. The Australian Government welcomes the report and is considering its response.

Last year's Budget provided record investment into regional Australia, and this year's Budget builds on that record. The Australian Government places a strong and thriving regional Australia at the centre of its plans for the recovery and growth of our national economy.

## **Motion 65**

*The National General Assembly recognises the significant value to Australian society of regional TV news bulletins; and calls on the Australian Government to review and implement changes to relevant legislation to ensure commercial regional broadcasters are required to produce significant local bulletins.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Paul Fletcher MP)*

*This motion was moved by Orange City Council*

## **Response**

### *Public Interest News Gathering Program*

The Australian Government recognises the importance of a strong regional news sector to local communities. In 2020, the Australian Government provided \$70 million in funding to 108 regional broadcasters and publishers (including the Australian Associated Press) under the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program. Of the total funding, five regional commercial television broadcasters shared in \$20 million. The objective of the PING Program is to support regional broadcasters and publishers to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional communities.

### *Media Reform Green Paper*

In November 2020, the Australian Government released the Media Reform Green Paper setting out proposed reforms to support the media industry and enhance the range and quality of services available to Australians. The proposals in the paper would provide free-to-air television broadcasters with the choice to transition to a lower-cost operating model, and enable regional broadcasters to seek assistance in covering the costs of regional news services through a Public Interest News Gathering Trust.

The Australian Government committed to consulting with industry on each of these proposals, and the pathway toward a modernised television regulatory framework. That consultation process is underway, and has brought into focus critical questions for the free-to-air television sector about the operating models and broadcasting technologies that would best deliver television services into the future. The Australian Government will continue working closely with the sector to support any transition, deliver fit-for-purpose regulation that reflects the diverse media landscape, and safeguard Australians' access to quality local news.

## **Motion 83**

*That this National Assembly calls on the Federal Government to fund ABC transmission black spot sites to ensure coverage for all communities in the event of Natural Disaster.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Paul Fletcher MP)*

*This motion was moved by South Burnett Regional Council*

## **Response**

### *ABC services*

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) plays a principal role in the delivery of timely, accurate and relevant information during fires, floods and other natural disasters or emergencies utilising its extensive radio and television networks and online services. As the national broadcaster, the ABC maintains close relationships with Emergency Management Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology, state emergency agencies and the Federal Attorney General's Department.

The ABC Local Radio network reaches over 99 per cent of the Australian population and is the organisation's primary platform for emergency broadcasts. This network is augmented by the provision of emergency information to digital television viewers via ABC1 and ABC News 24, as well as online audiences using ABC websites and social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

### *Royal Commission into National Natural Disasters*

The report of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disasters (30 October 2020) acknowledged the important role played by broadcast media, including the ABC and community radio in their coverage of emergency warnings and information in the 2019-20 bushfire season.

In its appearance before the Royal Commission, the ABC said that while the *Australian Broadcast Corporation Act 1983* and the ABC Charter do not require the organisation to assume an official role in emergency broadcasting, it considered this role to be 'central to the ABC's operations and have the highest priority among its activities' (page 307 of the report refers).

During the 2019-20 bushfire season, the ABC noted it had significant coverage and provided emergency warnings to over 950 natural hazardous events. When telecommunications towers were affected, it relied on its radio services for broad coverage (the ABC AM network reaches over 99 per cent of the population). Overall the ABC noted a significant increase in the public use of its services across all platforms during this bushfire season.

## **Motion 84**

*The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to initiate a "Natural Disaster Preventative Measures Fund" to provide financial assistance to Local Government for planning mitigation strategies for extreme natural disaster events.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Parkes Shire Council*

## **Response**

The Australian Government is investing in measures designed to increase the resilience and preparedness of communities across Australia to manage the often devastating impacts of natural disaster. The NRRRA is committed to driving this important Australian Government priority, including through meaningful collaboration with all levels of Government, including local government.

In 2020-21 the \$50 million resilience component from the Emergency Response Fund was allocated to the National Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Program (NFMIP). Under this program, 22 flood mitigation infrastructure projects across all states and territories received funding. This program will see state and territory governments working closely with local governments to deliver important flood resilience outcomes across Australian communities.

The Australian Government is also investing heavily in disaster risk reduction through the \$600 million Preparing Australia Program to improve long-term resilience of Australian communities. More details about the program, including potential support for local government, will be available before the end of 2021.

### **Motion 85**

*This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to accept and implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission on National Natural Disasters pertaining to an enhanced role for the Commonwealth in coordinating the established levels of state, territory and local council response, and affording Commonwealth assistance as requested by established local and state authorities. This will ensure a national response to emergencies that will facilitate our communities' resilience following disasters.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP)*

*This motion was moved by Shoalhaven City Council*

### **Response**

A number of changes have been made to the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework to incorporate recommendations from the Royal Commission and budget announcements, to provide clarity for stakeholders through amended language, account for situations that were previously not covered, and embed new processes. Budget initiative updates include:

- Establishment of the National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRRA)
- Establishment of the Australian Climate Service
- Enhancements to EMA.

Governance and architectural changes include:

- The new seven phase National Disaster Management and Recovery Continuum
- Embedding the role of the National Coordination Mechanism which operationalises the AGCMF. Through the National Coordination Mechanism, the Commonwealth coordinates the established levels of state, territory, and local council response to National natural disasters.
- Disbanding the National Crisis Committee and collapsing it into the National Coordination Mechanism.
- The application of the *National Emergency Declaration (NED) Act 2020*.

The HRWS Preparedness and Engagement Program provides face-to-face meetings between key government and jurisdictional emergency management leaders and decision-makers. The Program has commenced and is running from September to October 2021 and will include all the states and territories. There will also be preparedness briefing sessions to representatives from other Australian Government agencies, major charities and Non-Government Organisations.

The Australian Government is providing \$30.2m Funding for National Aerial Fire Fighting including \$4m for a national LAT expecting to be operating in December 2021.

The Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN) is the plan for the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance to Australian states and territories in an emergency or disaster. The Minister responsible for emergency management must authorise approval for the provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance.

### **Motion 86**

*The National General Assembly calls on the federal government to commit increased funding to proportionately enhance regional connectivity to the digital economy.*

*This motion was moved by Tamworth City Council*

### **Response**

The Australian Government has committed \$380 million (GST Excl) to the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) with more than 1,270 mobile base stations funded under Rounds 1 to 5A, of which 950 have been built and are now on air. The Government has committed \$80 million (GST Excl) to the next round (Round 6) to commence during 2021-22.

The Australian Government is also improving digital connectivity through the Regional Connectivity Program (the RCP), where it has committed \$183 million (GST Incl) to initiatives that will improve connectivity in regional and remote Australia, including \$117.4 million announced under Round 1 of the RCP; and an additional \$65.6 million for a second round. Furthermore, the Government is providing \$68.5 million (GST Excl) to improve telecommunications infrastructure across Northern Australia through the RCP (\$41.4 million) and the MBSP (\$25.1 million).

The Australian Government has also announced the \$18 million (GST Excl) Mobile Network Hardening Program (MNHP), with Stage 1 of the program providing \$13.2 million (GST Incl) in funding to the mobile network operators to improve network resilience by upgrading battery backup power at 467 base stations funded under Rounds 1 and 2 of the MBSP. The Government has also committed \$16.4 million (GST Excl) to establish the Peri-Urban Mobile Program (PUMP) to improve mobile connectivity in bushfire prone areas on the peri-urban fringe of our major cities.

NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) has rolled out the network using the technology best suited to each area of Australia. This includes the use of fixed wireless and satellite to provide services in locations that are technically and financially challenging to serve due to low population densities and the topography of the area (to around 8 per cent of premises).

Outside of major urban areas, NBN Co has deployed fixed-line broadband to around 73 per cent of premises, with the remainder served by fixed wireless or satellite technology. NBN Co provides uniform national wholesale pricing for each technology.

The network is designed to provide access to peak wholesale download speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) to all premises and at least 50 Mbps to 90 per cent of fixed-line premises. NBN Co is implementing plans so the majority of premises will be able to access wholesale speeds of up to 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps) by 2023.

Prior to the introduction of the NBN in regional areas, consumers were limited to copper-based ADSL and other services with a theoretical maximum speed of 24 Megabits per second (Mbps) but which only offered average speeds of around 8 Mbps. ADSL was offered with geographically differentiated pricing. For example, some providers sell ADSL in regional areas and add a \$30 surcharge to the retail price of its ADSL metro plans.

The Australian Government is supporting NBN Co to increase the access and affordability of ultrafast broadband to businesses across Australia. Through a \$700m Business Fibre Initiative, NBN Co has created 295 Business Fibre Zones across the country, offering Enterprise Ethernet, NBN Co's highest grade business product which provides symmetrical speeds of up to 1 Gigabit per second, at CBD equivalent prices and at no upfront cost to businesses. Prior to this, businesses in regional areas were charged at a significantly higher rate than in metropolitan areas. This means wholesale savings of up to 68 per cent on business grade broadband in some regional areas. Nationally, 90 per cent of business now have access to NBN Co's Enterprise Ethernet product at no upfront cost.

***Motion 89***

*That this National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Federal Government to institute discussions with all telecommunications providers, as a matter of priority, with a view to rapidly bringing services in regional and rural areas of Australia up to standards comparable with those in metropolitan areas.*

*(Motion also sent to the Hon Paul Fletcher MP)*

*This motion was moved by Cowra Shire Council*

**Response**

Please refer to the response to Motion 86.



**Senator the Hon Anne Ruston**

**Minister for Families and Social Services  
Minister for Women's Safety  
Senator for South Australia  
Manager of Government Business in the Senate**

Ref: MC21-007557

Ms Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Ms Scott

Thank you for your letter dated 10 August 2021, concerning the ALGA National General Assembly.

The Australian Government appreciates the work of local governments around Australia.

In relation to Motions 52 to 54.1 as carried by the National General Assembly, the Australian social security system aims to support the basic living standards of all Australians and increase their social and economic participation, whenever possible. The Government is committed to a welfare system that supports the most vulnerable, encourages those who are able to work or study, and is sustainable for future generations. The Government's objective is to ensure that people who have capacity to work support themselves to the extent possible.

The Government provided financial support to workers, including income support recipients, who were impacted by the recent lockdowns through the temporary COVID-19 Disaster Payment. COVID-19 Disaster Payment rates are being adjusted as vaccination rates reach 80 per cent in each state and territory. For further information, visit [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/covid-19-disaster-payment](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/covid-19-disaster-payment).

In relation to Motion 58, the Government has redesigned the former Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) to ensure that activities undertaken by VMA-funded organisations are aligned to a head/s of power under the Australian Constitution, and that the program is fit for purpose. This will improve the capacity of Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs), and the experience of volunteers, in communities across Australia.

From 1 July 2021, the Government commenced is distributing up to \$40.1 million (ex GST) over 5 years under the new VMA model to the volunteering peak bodies (peak bodies). This includes \$33.5 million (ex GST) over 5 years for peak bodies to develop and implement strategies to deliver online services to build the capacity of VIOs within their relevant jurisdictions, and break down barriers to volunteering faced by identified priority groups, including People with Disabilities, First Nations People and Newly Arrived Migrants.

Peak bodies must work in partnership with local organisations, including providing funding, to deliver these services. A sum of \$6.6 million (ex GST) has been provided through the 2021-22 Budget to support a smooth transition to the redesigned VMA during the first year. All previously funded VMA organisations were invited by the peak bodies to apply for a share of this funding.

In relation to Motion 58.1, the Government has recently funded the national peak body for volunteering, Volunteering Australia, \$0.6 million to develop a National Strategy for Volunteering (the strategy) and The Volunteering in Australia Report (the report). The report will bring together data and information on volunteering trends across Australia, and will provide a critical evidence base for the development of the strategy. The strategy will provide strategic direction for the sector and enable volunteering across Australia to be effective, inclusive and sustainable.

Volunteering Australia will call for a partnership approach between all levels of government, the volunteering sector, business and philanthropy, in the development of the strategy. The strategy will be reflective of the diverse demographics and interests within volunteering. Consultations will be held in rural, regional and metropolitan areas, and across every state and territory to factor in social, cultural and economic disparities. The development of the strategy is expected to be complete by December 2022.

In relation to Motion 101, the provision of state and territory concessions to Australian Government concession card holders is a matter for each respective state or territory government. The Government, however, provides a number of concessions to Australian Government Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, and Commonwealth Seniors Health Care holders, including:

- lower out-of-pocket costs for Pharmaceutical Benefits medicines, as Pensioner Concession Card holders pay only \$6.60 per prescription;
- bulk-billed general practitioner appointments, at the discretion of the general practitioner; and
- reduced out-of-hospital medical expenses after reaching the Concessional Extended Medicare Safety Net threshold of \$697 (as at 1 January 2021).

In addition, due to scheduled biannual indexation, from 20 September 2021, the Age Pension increased by \$14.80 a fortnight for singles to \$967.50, and \$22.40 a fortnight for couples to \$1,458.60 (combined). This was the largest dollar increase in pension rates since 2014.

Thank you again for raising this matter with me.

Yours sincerely



Anne Ruston

16/11/2021



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment**

Our Ref MC21-006370

Councillor Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
Australian Local Government Centre  
[alga@alga.asn.au](mailto:alga@alga.asn.au)

Dear Councillor Scott

Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2021 to the Hon Kevin Hogan MP, Assistant Minister for Local Government, regarding Jobs and Skills Partnerships for Local Government. As the issues raised fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Hon Stuart Robert MP, Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business, your letter was referred to his office for reply. The Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Australian Government's Local Jobs Program brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level to help job seekers connect to employment, reskilling and upskilling opportunities. Following the success of the initial Local Jobs Program, from 1 July 2021, the Program was expanded to cover all 51 Employment Regions across Australia and extended to 30 June 2025.

The Program has put in place Employment Facilitators in each region to support its delivery. The Facilitators play a brokerage role in each region by bringing together key stakeholders including employers, employment services providers, higher education and training organisations as well as all levels of government to work collaboratively to address the workforce priorities of the region.

The Employment Facilitators also chair Local Jobs and Skills Taskforces, which comprise representatives from the local region with interest and experience in skills, workforce and local economic development. They also connect and collaborate with others in the region and meet local labour market needs. The Taskforces work with stakeholders to develop a Local Jobs Plan that identifies the region's key priorities. These plans, available on the program's website, are designed to be updated as the region's challenges and priorities evolve.

The Local Recovery Fund is available to support small scale initiatives that address the priorities identified within the region's Local Jobs Plan, supporting upskilling, reskilling and employment opportunities to meet local workforce needs.

In addition to Local Recovery Fund initiatives, the National Priority Fund supports innovative solutions to address structural and other barriers with the goal of creating a more effective and efficient labour market for job seekers, employees, employers and industry as a whole.

As critical stakeholders in their regions, I would encourage each Local Government to engage with the Employment Facilitator in their region, if they have not already, to discuss the challenges and opportunities within their communities. Contact details for Facilitators can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment webpage at [www.dese.gov.au/local-jobs-program/employment-facilitators](http://www.dese.gov.au/local-jobs-program/employment-facilitators).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cary Duffy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cary Duffy  
A/g Assistant Secretary  
Local Jobs and Workforce Branch  
24 September 2021



**THE HON MICHAEL SUKKAR MP**  
**Assistant Treasurer**  
**Minister for Housing**  
**Minister for Homelessness, Social and Community Housing**

Ref: MC21-007467

Councillor Linda Scott  
City of Sydney Council  
Australian Local Government Association President

[ALGA@alga.asn.au](mailto:ALGA@alga.asn.au)

Dear Councillor Scott

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 August 2021 on behalf of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) concerning ALGA National General Assembly Motions.

The Australian Government understands housing is fundamental to the welfare of all Australians. Access to secure and affordable housing has significant economic and social benefits. Housing can improve education and health outcomes, increase workforce participation and reduce welfare dependency.

While state and territory governments are responsible for the provision of day-to-day housing and homelessness services, in 2021-22 the Government expects to spend around \$9 billion to help improve housing and homelessness outcomes. This includes an expected \$5.3 billion in Commonwealth Rent Assistance to help eligible Australians on welfare payments pay their rent and around \$1.6 billion through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) to state and territory governments.

The NHHA commits funding each year to the states and territories to contribute to improving access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing, including to prevent and address homelessness, and to support social and economic participation. Decisions on how funding is allocated under the NHHA is the responsibility of states and territories.

The Government has also established the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) to improve housing outcomes for all Australians. In addition to the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, the New Home Guarantee and the Family Home Guarantee, NHFIC also administers the Affordable Housing Bond Aggregator (AHBA) and the National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF).

The AHBA provides cheaper, long-term finance for community housing providers (CHPs), while the NHIF provides finance for critical infrastructure underpinning housing supply, particularly affordable housing. As at 30 June 2021, the NHFIC Board has approved over \$2.5 billion of loans to CHPs under the AHBA, supporting the delivery of more than 4,600 new social and affordable dwellings and refinancing over 8,300 existing dwellings; and over \$300 million in NHIF transactions supporting the delivery of more than 4,700 new social, affordable and market dwellings.

The NHIF offers eligible applicants concessional loans, grants and equity investments to finance the provision of critical infrastructure underpinning new housing supply, particularly affordable housing. In the 2017-18 Budget, the Government committed \$1 billion over five years for the operation of the NHIF, consisting of funding for concessional loans of \$600 million, equity investments of \$225 million and grants of \$175 million.

In November 2020, the Government commissioned an independent review into the operation of the NHFIC Act 2018 (the Review). The Review's terms of reference tasked it with considering the role of NHFIC in increasing housing supply, including NHFIC's ability to complement, leverage or support other Commonwealth and state activities relating to housing. The Review's report has been submitted to Government and the Government is considering its recommendations.

The Government is also contributing to the supply of housing by disposing of land that is no longer required by the Commonwealth, some of which is suitable for residential housing. In December 2017, the Government updated the Commonwealth Property Disposal Policy to require that any proposed sale of Commonwealth land that is suitable for housing should include affordable housing initiatives, where practical. At that time, the Government also published the Australian Government Property Register, which enables all Australians to propose alternative uses for Commonwealth land.

On 27 February 2020, the Department of Defence completed the sale of Bulimba Barracks to Australian developer, Shayher Group. In April 2021, Shayher Group submitted its development proposal for the site to Brisbane City Council (Council). Subject to Council approval, future site development is expected to deliver up to 855 dwellings in alignment with the Bulimba Barracks Master Plan.

The Department of Defence continues to work with other Commonwealth agencies, including its City Deal Partners, to deliver divestment projects that are expected to support increased housing. This includes sites in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and Launceston.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



The Hon Michael Sukkar MP



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Industry, Science,  
Energy and Resources**

MC21-006270

Cr Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Cr Scott

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 August 2021 to the Hon Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction, regarding climate change policy. The Minister has passed on your letter to the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources to reply. I am responding on the Minister's behalf.

Australia is committed to the Paris Agreement and is taking practical action to reduce emissions. The Government released its Long Term Emissions Reduction Plan on 26 October 2021. This is a whole-of-economy plan to deliver net zero emissions by 2050. The technology-driven plan sets out the Government's credible pathway to net zero by 2050 while preserving Australian jobs and generating new opportunities for industries and regional Australia.

Australia has a strong track record. Our latest inventory shows that emissions are at their lowest levels since records began in 1990 and that Australia will meet and exceed our 2030 Paris target, which is to reduce emissions by 26-28 per cent below 2005 levels. The latest emissions projections show that we are on track to meet and beat our 2030 target by 80-148 million tonnes, representing a reduction of between 30-35 per cent below 2005 levels. Under a Technology Investment Roadmap-aligned scenario, Australia is projected to reduce its emissions by as much as 35 per cent below 2005 levels.

The Government's Technology Investment Roadmap and yearly Low Emissions Technology Statements are the cornerstone of Australia's Long Term Emissions Reduction Plan. The Government has committed to invest at least \$21 billion in low emissions technologies in the decade to 2030, driving more than \$80 billion in total public and private investment and supporting 160,000 jobs.

The Government has also committed to establish a new \$1 billion technology fund to turbocharge investment in Australian companies to develop new low emissions technology. The Low Emissions Technology Commercialisation Fund will combine \$500 million of new capital for the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) with \$500 million from private sector investors. The proposed fund will invest in early-stage and growth businesses which are commercialising technologies that have the potential to accelerate Australia's transition to net zero emissions by 2050.

The Government has a strong record of supporting renewable energy. There has been an unprecedented wave of investment in renewable energy underway over recent years supported by the Renewable Energy Target.

The transition to reliable renewables will be supported through a high-tech expansion of the Snowy Mountains Scheme and a second interconnector, Marinus Link, between Tasmania and Victoria. These projects will boost pumped hydro storage capacity and allow more clean energy to be deployed while maintaining a reliable energy supply.

Over two and a half million – more than one in four – Australian homes now have solar panels on their roof. In 2020, Australia deployed wind and solar PV at eight and a half times the global per capita average.

The Government is committed to enabling consumer choice for new vehicle and fuel technologies. The development of hybrid, battery electric, and hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles is being driven by global car manufacturers. The number of consumers who choose to buy these vehicles will rapidly increase as these new technologies reach parity with mature alternatives. The Government's Future Fuels Strategy supports people to adopt new technologies where it makes sense for them to do so, including hybrids, battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

Yours sincerely

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

Conrad Buffier  
A/g General Manager  
Climate Change Policy Branch  
2 December 2021



**The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP**  
**Minister for Indigenous Australians**  
**Member for Hasluck**

Reference: MC21-004286

Councillor Linda Scott  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
[alga@alga.asn.au](mailto:alga@alga.asn.au)

  
Dear Councillor

Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2021 regarding Motions passed at the Australian Local Government Association's June 2021 National General Assembly.

I would also like to thank the Australian Local Government Association for its input to the Indigenous Voice Co-Design process and participation in the 21 August 2021 Infrastructure and Regional Development roundtable on the National Roadmap for Indigenous Skills, Jobs and Wealth Creation. I also thank you for your strong focus on supporting Indigenous Australians' representation at all levels of government and for seeking to leverage the cultural and environmental knowledge and skills of Indigenous Australians to better manage the Australian environment.

I have responded to each of the motions with reference to my portfolio responsibilities. I note that the Australian Local Government Association has also sought responses on a number of the motions from the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Susan Ley MP, the Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, and the Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Local Government, the Hon Kevin Hogan MP. I have provided copies of my response to each of the Ministers.

**Motion 28: The Australian Government support the transition to an environmentally and socially sustainable economy and society.**

The Morrison Government supports measures for an environmentally and socially sustainable economy and society. The Government has invested in measures that promote environmental sustainability, such as the Indigenous Rangers Program and Indigenous Protected Areas Program. I have provided further information on each of these programs below.

Additionally, in the 2021-22 Budget the Morrison Government announced a commitment to develop a new Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (ISEP) to replace existing programs from 1 July 2022. It will contribute to closing the gap in employment by supporting pathways to meaningful and sustainable employment for Indigenous Australians, through flexible, locally informed investment.

ISEP will increase economic opportunities for Indigenous Australians and drive actions that connect Indigenous Australians to jobs, targeted skills acquisition and career advancement opportunities. The program will be co-designed with Indigenous Australians, in consultation with key stakeholders.

**Motion 36: The Australian Government provide employment opportunities nationwide to support Cultural Burning as a resilience strategy.**

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) works closely with Indigenous land managers, funding 129 Indigenous ranger groups across Australia to manage natural and cultural values of Country, including fire management.

The Indigenous Rangers Program provides jobs for around 1,900 Indigenous Australians each year. NIAA and the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment also support Traditional Owners to manage more than 74 million hectares of land under the Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) program. Indigenous rangers and IPA managers undertake fire management as part of their regular activities for a range of benefits including natural disaster resilience on Indigenous and state held land.

In addition, as the ISEP will be a flexible, locally informed program, there is nothing that would preclude a conservation management initiative being considered under the program in future if that was a priority supported by the region.

**Motion 36.1: The Australian Government include 'cultural burns' as a means of bushfire management within the National Natural Disasters Arrangements.**

The Morrison Government supports in principle the Royal Commission on National Natural Disaster Arrangement recommendations:

- 18.1 that Australian, state, territory and local governments should engage further with Traditional Owners to explore the relationship between Indigenous land and fire management and natural disaster resilience and
- 18.2 that governments should explore further opportunities to leverage Indigenous land and fire management insights, in the development, planning and execution of public land management activities.

**Motion 36.2: The Australian Government support and fund Indigenous agencies to put in place bushfire hazard reduction 'cool burns'.**

As mentioned above, the NIAA works closely through the Indigenous Rangers Program with Indigenous land managers on fire management.

In addition, the Morrison Government's National Bushfire Recovery Fund provides \$2 million to empower Traditional Owners to share knowledge and build understanding of traditional Indigenous fire management practices, as part of the \$149.7 million support for native wildlife and habitat restoration following the 2019-20 fires.

Also, under the Morrison Government's \$200 million Bushfire Recovery Regional Fund, funding of more than \$9.5 million has been provided for Traditional Owner-led activities, including cultural burning, through Natural Resource Management organisations and state governments.

**Motions 38: The Australian Government acknowledge the leadership of Local Government and the Australian Government support the key principles of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.**

The Morrison Government is committed to recognising Indigenous Australians in the Constitution and will hold a referendum when a consensus is reached and it has the best chance of success. To successfully bring about constitutional change, Australians must clearly understand and support the proposed amendments. Only eight out of 44 past referenda have been successful and it is important we learn from this and agree to a set of words that are acceptable to the majority of Australians. We must be pragmatic and consider options that provide the greatest chance of success.

**Motion 39: The establishment of an appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory structure and/or representative voice to Local Government.**

A robust 18-month co-design process to develop proposals for Local & Regional Voices and a National Voice has recently concluded. Co-design groups, made up of 52 members from around the country, have led this process to design the detail of an Indigenous Voice and over 9,400 people have had their say on the proposals.

Consultation feedback strongly supported an Indigenous Voice at both local and regional and national levels, as well as a notion of an approach for Local & Regional Voices that would see them providing advice to and working in partnership with all levels of government, including local governments.

I received the Final Report in July 2021. This is a significant report that comprehensively details the proposals and the deliberations of the co-design process, and it deserves thorough consideration by the Government. The importance of this report and what it means for Indigenous Australians means it is too important to rush this consideration process. We want to get this right.

I encourage your members to read the submissions and summaries from the consultations online at [voice.niaa.gov.au](http://voice.niaa.gov.au). There is also information about the co-design process, Indigenous Voice proposals and the co-design Interim Report.

**Motion 40: Federal, State and Territory Governments commit to nationally consistent recognition of Indigenous Local Government Councils as an Aboriginal controlled entity across Australia at all levels of Government.**

The Commonwealth's recognition of a council as a local governing body is determined by its establishment by, or under a law of, a state or territory and its declaration by the Minister on the advice of the relevant State Minister. To achieve a nationally harmonised approach to the recognition of Indigenous councils, Australian Local Government Association should seek to progress this matter through the National Federation Reform Council.

**Motion 41a: The Australian Local Government Association develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.**

The Morrison Government supports Motion 41a. Reconciliation Action Plans are an important way for any organisation to commit to activities that work towards reconciliation. I encourage your members to refer to the information provided by Reconciliation Australia at [reconciliation.org.au](http://reconciliation.org.au).

**Motion 41b: Fund a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Safety Training Program for all Local Government Elected Members and Council staff.**

There are two programs developed by the Morrison Government that your members can access. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) CORE program and the NIAA's Footprints program.

CORE is a national cultural awareness training program available by subscription to AIATSIS. It was developed by AIATSIS in partnership with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Social Services and builds on many years of research and involvement in cultural competence initiatives.

CORE provides a detailed exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and issues; to assist and enhance cultural understanding; gain a deeper sense of self-awareness and critical reflection; and enhance personal and professional capacity to engage respectfully and effectively in an intercultural context. CORE promotes dialogue between participants and contributes to cultural safety in workplaces. Further information is available at [aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au).

The Footprints program is a continuous cultural learning and development framework that may be adopted by any organisation, large or small, at no cost. The Footprints program encourages participants to strengthen their cultural competency and embed respectful learnings about the diverse cultural backgrounds of all Australians and increase their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, peoples and histories. The Australian Local Government Association can contact the NIAA Footprints team at [footprints@niaa.gov.au](mailto:footprints@niaa.gov.au) for program details and how to initiate the program in any organisation.

Thank you for raising these matters and I look forward to continuing to work with the Australian Local Government Association.

Yours sincerely



The Hon KEN WYATT AM MP  
Minister for Indigenous Australians

19 / 10 / 2021

cc: Minister for the Environment, the Hon Susan Ley MP, the Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, the Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Local Government, the Hon Kevin Hogan MP.



PRIME MINISTER

Reference: MC21-100894

8 OCT 2021

Councillor Linda Scott  
President of the Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Councillor Scott

I write in response to your letter dated 30 August 2021 regarding the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) 2021 National General Assembly Meeting and Motions.

Thank you for sharing the Motions provided by the five Councils regarding membership of the National Cabinet. I understand that you have separately written to several Ministers regarding Motions relevant to their portfolios.

As you aware, under the new federal relations architecture the National Federation Reform Council (NFRC) provides an opportunity for all levels of government to come together to discuss priority national federation issues, similar to the former COAG. COAG formerly met, on average, between one to two times per year. Likewise, the NFRC meets once per year. ALGA made an important contribution through its membership of COAG for many years, and I look forward to continuing to work with ALGA and state and territory governments to achieve national reform objectives through the NFRC.

I have copied this letter to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Hon Ben Morton MP, and the Assistant Minister for Local Government, the Hon Kevin Hogan MP.

I look forward to seeing you at the next NFRC meeting at the end of this year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Morrison', with a small blue checkmark to the right.

SCOTT MORRISON