



AUSTRALIAN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ASSOCIATION

Pre-Budget Submission 2022-23



As our nation faces social and economic challenges unseen in peace-time Australia, Australians need their decision-makers working together.

They want, expect, and need funding initiatives that deliver a locally led recovery from COVID-19, and a focus on opportunity rather than austerity from this economic crisis.



Australia's local governments are ready to work with the Commonwealth, as well as our state and territory governments, to help deliver a COVID-19 recovery program that reaches every Australian town, city and region.

This submission outlines a series of partnership opportunities that will support economic recovery in every community, improve our nation's transport and community infrastructure, increase local resilience to emergency events and the impacts of climate change, and help build a new circular economy.

They have been assessed by independent economists, and if funded and implemented would contribute at least \$6.65 billion to Australia's Gross Domestic Product and create 44,905 new jobs per annum.

Local government has an excellent track record of partnering with the Commonwealth, and we look forward to exploring new opportunities for collaboration.

Working together, we can build a better future for all Australians, and ensure that no community is left behind.

Cr Linda Scott
ALGA President

OUR MEMBERS



ABOUT ALGA



The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the voice of local government in Australia, representing 537 councils across the nation. In structure, ALGA is a federation of state and territory Local Government Associations.

ALGA was established in 1947 and throughout its history has been actively involved in issues of national significance affecting local government and local communities.

ALGA's policies and strategic priorities are determined by the ALGA Board, comprising two representatives from each of the member associations, who elect the Vice Presidents and President.



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ECONOMIC RECOVERY

1. An initial injection of Financial Assistance Grants worth **\$1.3 billion** (13,213 jobs created, \$1.928 billion contribution to annual GDP)
2. Restoration of Financial Assistance Grants to at least **one percent** of Commonwealth taxation revenue (16,242 jobs created, \$2.37 billion contribution to annual GDP)

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

3. **\$500 million per year** for a four-year extension of Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (3,974 jobs created, \$604 million contribution to annual GDP)
4. **\$300 million per year** for four years to address road transport first and last-mile issues (2,332 jobs created, \$366 million contribution to annual GDP)
5. An increase in Roads to Recovery funding from \$500 million to **\$800 million per year** (2,363 jobs created, \$367 million contribution to annual GDP)
6. An increase in Black Spot Program funding from \$110 million to **\$200 million per year** for the next four years (693 jobs, \$111 million contribution to annual GDP)
7. **\$20 million per year** permanent supplementary road funding for South Australia (158 jobs, \$24 million contribution to annual GDP)
8. **\$55 million over four years** to continue the Stronger Regional Digital Connectivity Package (99 jobs, \$18 million contribution to annual GDP)
9. **\$200 million over four years** for innovative affordable housing partnerships (469 jobs, \$68 million contribution to annual GDP)

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

10. **\$100 million per year** for four years for local government circular waste innovation projects (797 jobs created, \$136 million contribution to annual GDP).

BUILDING RESILIENCE

11. **\$200 million per year** for four years for disaster mitigation (1,833 jobs, \$280 million contribution to annual GDP)
12. **\$200 million over four years** for a Local Government Climate Response Partnership Fund (467 jobs, \$73 million contribution to annual GDP)
13. **\$100 million per year** for four years for Closing the Gap initiatives (804 jobs, \$117 million contribution to annual GDP)
14. **\$100 million over four years** for a local government place-based health and activity program (263 jobs, \$35 million contribution to annual GDP)
15. **\$120 million per year** over four years to support the community arts and culture sectors impacted by COVID-19 (1,198 jobs created, \$153 million contribution to annual GDP)



Over the past 12 months, Australia's 537 councils have continued to support their local communities through the devastating COVID-19 pandemic.

From providing targeted relief to impacted communities and direct support to local businesses, to modifying services to meet community needs, bringing forward infrastructure projects to create jobs and stimulate their local economies, we have done everything we can to support our communities during this challenging period.

We were pleased to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth – as well as our state and territory governments – on stimulus projects, including through the Federal Government's \$2.5 billion Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, where we successfully delivered new sporting facilities, pathways, landscaping, playgrounds and public lighting for our communities.

This unprecedented collaboration and cooperation across all levels of government should not be lost in the wake of the pandemic. Australians understand the need for a coordinated, long-term national recovery plan that leverages the strengths of all three tiers of government and offers certainty that every community – no matter how big or small – will receive the support it needs to build back stronger.

Only local governments, in partnership with the Commonwealth, can deliver this.

As the level of government closest to the people, only councils can lead and deliver a tailored, community-focussed recovery that generates jobs, boosts productivity, builds resilience and facilitates wellbeing.

As a willing partner in this recovery, local government can offer:

- ◆ **537 councils** around the nation with a deep connection to their local community;
- ◆ A **194,000-person workforce**, skilled across almost 400 different occupations, and supported by thousands of volunteers;
- ◆ A combined annual budget of almost **\$50 billion**; and
- ◆ Stewardship of **one third** of Australia's public infrastructure, including **75 percent** of the nation's road network.

The funding priorities outlined in this submission have been assessed by independent economists to contribute at least \$6.65 billion to annual GDP and create an additional 44,905 jobs each year.

They would also improve Australia's workforce capacity, create healthier and more connected communities, help reduce Australia's emissions, and better prepare our nation for increasingly frequent disaster events.

Councils are already doing much to support Australia's COVID-19 recovery, but with better funding partnerships, we could do even more.

In particular, it is long-term and ongoing funding that will provide us with the confidence to make strategic long-term investments in our communities.

A strong and sustainable local government sector can play a key role supporting Australia's prosperity, wellbeing and resilience, and the funding priorities in this submission are a roadmap for more effective Commonwealth/local government collaboration.



PRIORITY 1

IMMEDIATE INJECTION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Commitment sought

An initial injection of Financial Assistance Grants to local government of \$1.3 billion to support communities and jobs and resolve the current practice of bringing forward two quarterly Financial Assistance Grant payments each year.

If funded:

Jobs created: 13,213

Contribution to annual GDP: \$1.928 billion

What's the issue?

Local government budgets have been under pressure responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of decreased revenue and increased spending on new and expanded programs.

Why does it matter?

If adequately resourced, councils can play an important role supporting their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic and in recovery.

Additional information

The coronavirus pandemic, coming straight after the Black Summer bushfires and years of drought in many areas, continues to put stress on local government budgets across the nation.

Despite the ongoing impacts of border closures, councils have continued to support their communities through providing targeted rate relief, modifying and introducing new services as needed, and partnering with other tiers of government on economic stimulus initiatives.

These challenges have compounded an already difficult situation for many councils particularly in rural, regional, and remote communities with large areas to service but small ratepayer bases.

They have also exposed the financial vulnerability of many urban or tourism dependent councils where there has been a significant decline in revenue due to border closures, working-from-home directives and the mandated closure of local facilities.

As the Omicron variant of the coronavirus takes hold, clouding Australia's economic outlook, councils will need to maintain their community and economic support efforts for the foreseeable future.

An immediate – and once off – \$1.3 billion injection of Financial Assistance Grants would enable us to continue to support our communities through the pandemic, and ensure no community is left behind in Australia's economic recovery.

PRIORITY 2

RESTORING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Commitment sought

Restoring Financial Assistance Grants to at least 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue via a phased approach.

If funded:

Jobs created: 16,242

Contribution to annual GDP: \$2.37 billion

What's the issue?

The value of Financial Assistance Grants provided to local government has declined over the past three decades from around 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue to around 0.55 percent.

Why does it matter?

Local governments only collect around 3.5 percent of taxation nationally and need support from other spheres of government to provide and maintain the infrastructure their communities need such as swimming pools, playgrounds, sports facilities, regional airports, and roads.

Additional information

Core federal funding to local government has been in relative decline since the mid-1980s. The ability of many councils to continue providing necessary services and infrastructure was further impacted when the indexation of Financial Assistance Grants was frozen in the 2014-15 Federal Budget, before being reinstated three years later in 2017-18.

ALGA's *2021 National State of the Assets* report indicates that around 10 percent of the infrastructure owned and managed by Australian councils is in poor condition and requires intervention.

Financial Assistance Grants are particularly valuable for local government, as the funding is untied, meaning it can be spent where it is most needed. This can include building new infrastructure, delivering new programs that meet community needs, as well as maintaining local pools, libraries, sporting grounds and roads.

Untied funding provided to councils also enables them to invest in their workforces, through bringing on new staff or upskilling or retraining existing employees, helping address Australia's workforce capacity challenges.

Funding provided to councils is spent locally, so increasing Financial Assistance Grants provides the Commonwealth with the opportunity to ensure that every Australian community shares in the benefits of our nation's COVID-19 recovery.



PRIORITY 3

LOCAL ROADS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Commitment sought

\$500 million per year for a four-year extension of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

If funded:

Jobs created: 3,974

Contribution to annual GDP: \$604 million

What's the issue?

Councils need ongoing funding to deliver strategic infrastructure projects that create jobs and support economic recovery.

Why does it matter?

Adequately resourced, local government can play a key role partnering with the Commonwealth on stimulus projects that will support Australia's ongoing recovery.

Extending the Commonwealth's well-received Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program would enable councils to continue to play a meaningful role as partners in Australia's economic recovery.

Additional information

The \$2.5 billion Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program announced in the 2020-21 Federal Budget has supported all 537 councils across Australia to deliver thousands of shovel-ready projects.

These projects have supported jobs and local economies as well as enabling communities to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

By 10 March 2021, local governments had nominated over 4800 projects under the LRCI Program.

Many councils around the country have shovel-ready projects already identified in their long-term financial plans that could be brought forward with funding support from other tiers of government.

Extending this program would also benefit Australians in every corner of the nation through the creation of new libraries, sporting facilities, community centres, roads, recreation trails and playgrounds.

PRIORITY 4

FIRST AND LAST-MILE ACCESS

Commitment sought

\$300 million per year for four years to address road transport first and last-mile issues.

If funded:

Jobs created: 2,332

Contribution to annual GDP: \$366 million

What's the issue?

The movement of freight is one of the biggest transport challenges facing Australian cities and regions, impacting on both commuter and freight delivery times.

Why does it matter?

Additional targeted investment is necessary to unlock our nation's productivity by improving access for freight vehicles, and connectivity between local roads and preferred state and national freight routes.

Additional information

The efficient movement of freight is essential in a productive economy.

Local roads – owned and managed by councils – are a critical part of our national transport network.

With increased demand including higher productivity heavy vehicles, many local roads are no longer fit-for-purpose.

Many councils are already investing in regional transport plans that identify key transport routes and linkages, and investment opportunities at the local and regional level.

Improving first and last-mile access would also result in safer roads for all users, reducing the risk of serious or deadly motor vehicle accidents.

The Commonwealth can partner with local government to address congestion on local roads, and unlock the productivity of our nation's freight network, while improving liveability for all Australians.

PRIORITY 5

ROADS TO RECOVERY

Commitment sought

An increase in Roads to Recovery funding from \$500 million to \$800 million per annum.

If funded:

Jobs created: 2,363

Contribution to annual GDP: \$367 million

What's the issue?

ALGA's *2021 National State of the Assets* report indicates that a significant number of Australia's local roads are in poor condition and require intervention.

Why does it matter?

Inadequately maintained roads seriously compromise service levels and road user experiences, impacting on productivity and local amenity.

Additional information

Local governments own and manage about 678,000km of sealed and unsealed roads, equivalent to about 77 percent of Australia's road network.

Councils collect just 3.5 percent of Australia's taxation revenue, and unlike other tiers of government, local government has no direct mechanism to raise funds for road construction and maintenance such as road user charges, registration charges, or other road or transport-related fees or charges.

ALGA's *2021 National State of the Assets* report shows that 8 percent of the sealed roads owned and managed by local government – and 14 percent of unsealed roads – are in poor condition, function and capacity, and are close to reaching the end of their useful life.

The replacement cost of both sealed and unsealed roads is estimated to be \$17.8 billion.

This is well beyond the financial capacity of local government, so ongoing and sustainable funding partnerships with other tiers of government are vital.

The Roads to Recovery Program plays an important role supporting councils to upgrade their local roads as required, but more support is needed to address the current backlog.

By increasing this program's allocation by \$300 million per annum, the Commonwealth could support councils to maintain and upgrade more local roads in need of urgent intervention, while creating new jobs and supporting local contractors and suppliers.

PRIORITY 6

BLACK SPOT PROGRAM

Commitment sought

Increase the Commonwealth's Black Spot Program from \$110 million to \$200 million per year over the next four years.

If funded:

Jobs created: 693

Contribution to annual GDP: \$111 million

What's the issue?

Poor visibility on local roads and bridges is a significant safety risk for all road users.

Why does it matter?

Every year about 1,200 people are killed on Australian roads, and around 40,000 people are seriously injured.

Additional information

The recently released *National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030* has a target to reduce road fatalities by 50 percent. The strategy identifies local government as a key stakeholder in implementing road safety measures.

Substandard, poorly designed and inadequately maintained roads and bridges which may have differing or inconsistent road surfaces, irregularly or poorly maintained road shoulders, poor road markings, or poor lighting can have serious road safety outcomes.

Every year, about 1,200 people are killed on Australian roads and around 40,000 are seriously injured.

Half of all road crashes are on local roads, and these crashes account for 52 percent of all casualties and 40 percent of all road deaths. This means that driving on a local road involves increased risk of being seriously injured that is 1.5 times higher than driving on a state road.

Deaths on rural and regional roads far outnumber deaths on metropolitan roads.

The Black Spot Program plays a crucial role supporting state, territory and local governments to address known accident sites that pose an ongoing risk to road users.

Increasing the total funding available through the Black Spot program to \$200 million per annum would support councils to make key improvements at significantly more sites, reducing the risks of serious injury or death.

PRIORITY 7

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ROAD FUNDING

Commitment sought

Address the South Australian road funding anomaly by making the additional \$20 million per annum provided to South Australia in 2021-22 and 2022-23 permanent.

If funded:

Jobs created: 158

Contribution to annual GDP: \$24 million

What's the issue?

Based on the national funding formula, South Australia receives an inequitable share of local roads funding.

Why does it matter?

South Australian councils rely on this additional funding to provide and maintain safe and productive roads, and making this funding allocation permanent would support more strategic investment in these roads.

Additional information

Road funding is particularly challenging in South Australia where for many years there has been a shortfall in the level of funding to SA councils.

South Australia has 11 percent of Australia's local roads, and 7 percent of its population, but only receives 5.5 percent of the Identified Roads component of Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants.

Since 2003, South Australia has received an additional \$20 million supplementary road funding per annum to address this inequity, and in recent years this top-up funding has been extended by two years at a time.

South Australian councils are responsible for more than 75,000km of local roads, and the supplementary road funding they receive from the Commonwealth plays a crucial role in maintaining this network.

Making this allocation permanent would provide South Australian councils with certainty and confidence to invest in their local road networks and provide safer and more efficient roads for all users.

PRIORITY 8

STRONGER REGIONAL DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PACKAGE

Commitment sought

Continuing the Stronger Regional Digital Connectivity Package at \$55 million over four years.

If funded:

Jobs created: 99

Contribution to annual GDP: \$18 million

What's the issue?

Many communities across regional, rural and remote Australia are missing out on fast, affordable and reliable digital connections, or pay a higher cost compared to their metropolitan counterparts.

Why does it matter?

Telecommunications plays a key role supporting the productivity and wellbeing of regional, rural and remote Australia.

Additional information

All communities, whether they are in our major capitals or in regional towns, need to be future-ready.

COVID-19 has seen a much greater dependence on telecommunications as many people have worked from home and some have moved from our cities to our regions to work remotely.

Reliable, high-speed broadband is essential for community resilience as Australians continue the trend of working from home and migrating away from cities.

Our agriculture industry also needs fast, affordable, and reliable broadband services and suitable access to digital infrastructure to remain competitive internationally.

Access to telehealth and online education has also been critically important during COVID-19 to enable communities to access services while in isolation or when borders have closed.

Removing remaining mobile blackspots is vital to allowing remote working arrangements to develop so communities remain sustainable and resilient.

Connectivity is also a big part of encouraging people to live, work and invest in regional areas, and it is important that residents and businesses have access to the same level of telecommunications services available in urban areas.

ALGA welcomed the announcement of the \$220 million Regional Connectivity Program announced in the 2019 Federal Budget in response to the 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review, and we are calling for a four-year \$55 million extension of this program.

PRIORITY 9

AFFORDING HOUSING

Commitment sought

Support local government's efforts in addressing affordable housing and homelessness by providing funding of \$200 million over four years to assist councils to develop and implement innovative housing partnerships.

If funded:

Jobs created: 469

Contribution to annual GDP: \$68 million

What's the issue?

There is less social and affordable housing stock available than there was a decade ago, and more low-income Australians are experiencing housing stress.

Why does it matter?

Long waiting lists for social housing and relatively unaffordable private rental markets can lead to household stress and have negative social and economic consequences.

Additional information

The shortage and rising costs of rental properties and affordable home ownership are having significant social and economic impacts in cities and towns across Australia, including rural and regional communities.

This is due to a range of factors including changes to recent migration patterns, cheap finance and labour and material shortages in the construction sector.

The impacts on local governments and communities includes housing stress for individuals and families, difficulty in attracting and housing key workers and an increase in homelessness.

Whilst the provision of affordable housing is not a local government responsibility, councils often facilitate affordable housing within their communities, operating within state/territory planning, financial and other legislation requirements.

For councils looking to drive a locally led economic recovery and create new jobs in their communities, an appropriate supply and mix of housing to suit diverse community needs is crucial.

The housing challenge is different in every community, and the council response is dependent on its financial resources and priorities.

Local government also supports a national housing summit as a precursor to the development of a national housing strategy, which includes local government in the national dialogue.



PRIORITY 10

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Commitment sought

\$100 million per annum over four years to fund local government circular waste innovation projects.

If funded:

Jobs created: 797

Contribution to annual GDP: \$136 million

What's the issue?

Local government requires additional support to support the implementation of the National Waste Action Plan and mitigate the impacts of Australia's waste export bans.

Why does it matter?

Australia is one of the world's largest waste generators per capita. We are running out of landfills, and recycling collection costs that are borne by all Australians continue to rise.

Additional information

Moving to a circular economy, where waste is designed out of the system and resources are valued, will bring down business costs, support new industries and jobs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

By mid-2024, when Australia's waste export ban comes into full effect, 645,000 additional tonnes of waste plastic, paper, glass, and tyres will need to be recycled each year.

To deal with this increased waste stream, the Commonwealth set up the \$190 million Recycling Modernisation Fund in 2020 to spur investment in recycling by industry and governments.

Recognising that their communities want concerted action to reduce and reuse waste – and mindful of the fact that easily accessible space for landfills is in short supply – local governments have been prominent in pursuing innovative solutions to recycling.

However, with waste export bans starting to take effect, Australia faces a looming waste and recycling crisis unless urgent action is taken to find more opportunities to process low-value mixed paper and plastics from municipal co-mingled recycling.

We are also seeking support and guidance on how to unlock the circular economy locally (particularly in rural, regional and remote areas), as well as support to investigate and potentially implement a national bin harmonisation program to improve kerbside recycling and maximise opportunities for materials to be reused.



PRIORITY 11

DISASTER MITIGATION

Commitment sought

In line with the Productivity Commission's recommendations from 2014, a targeted disaster mitigation program of \$200 million per annum for four years which will reduce the costs of response and recovery and strengthen community resilience.

If funded:

Jobs created: 1,833

Contribution to annual GDP: \$280 million

What's the issue?

Less than 5 percent of disaster funding in Australia goes towards mitigation and community resilience measures.

Why does it matter?

Appropriate investment in disaster mitigation protects exposed communities, lowering household insurance premiums for residents while ultimately reducing the need for recovery funding.

Additional information

Australia has been profoundly impacted by natural disasters in the past few years, and the impacts of climate change will result in more frequent and more severe disasters in the future.

Communities need support to take preventative mitigation measures to limit the severity of disasters, as well as appropriate and adequate support to recover from these events. Natural disasters have claimed many lives and impacted hundreds of thousands of people.

Less than five percent of disaster funding in Australia goes towards mitigation and community resilience measures. This figure needs to rise to ensure that communities – particularly those where exposure to fires and floods is greatest – are better prepared for climate change.

Protecting communities from the impacts of bushfires, floods, and sea-level rise – and helping them adapt to climate change – are priorities for local government, but we could do more with additional mitigation funding from the Commonwealth.

Not only does effective disaster mitigation reduce Commonwealth and state and territory expenditure on recovery after an event, but it is also important in reducing the risks faced by communities and preparing for increased future risks.

PRIORITY 12

CLIMATE CHANGE

Commitment sought

A Local Government Climate Response Partnership Fund of \$200 million over four years to enable planning and preparation to minimise the impacts of climate change in local communities and enable councils to achieve climate neutrality as soon as practicable.

If funded:

Jobs created: 467

Contribution to annual GDP: \$73 million

What's the issue?

Addressing the causes and impacts of climate change requires a collaborative effort across all three tiers of government, business and our communities. The importance of this collaboration was identified in the Federal Government's recently released *National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021-2025*.

Why does it matter?

With funding support, local government can help communities adapt to climate change and deliver on Australia's emissions targets as our nation transitions towards net zero.

Additional information

Climate change poses significant threats to our wellbeing, economy and to the natural environment.

The *2021 Australian Local Government Climate Review* found that more than 70 percent of responding councils have set or are planning ambitious emissions reduction targets for their own operations, while 80 percent have set or are investigating emissions reduction targets across their entire community.

Another recent report indicated that if all the current targets set by local governments were met, Australia would be 96 percent of the way to meeting its current target of a 28 percent reduction by 2030.

Across our nation, councils are investing in new technologies, supporting local businesses to innovate and adapt, while creating new jobs in their communities. This includes introducing energy efficient LED streetlights, installing electric vehicle charging stations, using recycled road construction materials, and increasing tree canopy coverage.

Some councils are going even further, investing in renewable energy plants, and supporting local businesses and residents to reduce their emissions. These initiatives are scalable and could be replicated by other councils with sustainable funding support.

By supporting us to reduce emissions at a local level, the Federal Government can deliver on its own emissions commitments, ensuring that no community is left behind as we transition to net zero.

PRIORITY 13

CLOSING THE GAP

Commitment sought

\$100 million per annum over four years provided directly to local governments to support the capabilities of indigenous councils and the implementation of the Closing the Gap local/regional voice.

If funded:

Jobs created: 804

Contribution to annual GDP: \$117 million

What's the issue?

Local government needs support to deliver on its targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap partnership.

Why does it matter?

There is an urgent need to reduce the social and economic disadvantage that Indigenous Australians, particularly those living in remote communities, have suffered for decades.

Additional information

In 2020, ALGA co-signed a landmark agreement marking a new chapter in the national effort to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

At the heart of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Partnership are four agreed priority reform targets and 16 socio-economic targets in areas including education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

The Indigenous Voice Co-design Final Report to the Australian Government was released in December 2021. The Local & Regional Voice will contribute to achieving the Closing the Gap outcomes by providing avenues for Indigenous voices to be heard, including to provide feedback to government on Closing the Gap.

In late 2021, ALGA published its Implementation Plan for this Partnership Agreement which will enhance the shared policy development and decision-making at the local government level.

As the level of government closest to the people, we have an essential role supporting and helping to steer the development of policies and programs in partnership with local Indigenous peoples that address these priorities at the local and regional level.

We also play a positive role in reconciliation and celebrating Indigenous culture and identity, and sustainably funded could work effectively to reduce Indigenous disadvantage in all its forms.

PRIORITY 14

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Commitment sought

\$100 million over four years for a local government place-based health and activity program.

If funded:

Jobs created: 263

Contribution to annual GDP: \$35 million

What's the issue?

Two in three Australian adults are overweight or obese, and around one in five Australians have experienced a mental disorder in the past 12 months.

Why does it matter?

Councils can play an important preventative role in community health, extending the length and quality of life enjoyed by Australians and minimising the cost to our nation's health system.

Additional information

There is compelling research and evidence supporting the links between people's overall physical and mental health and the environments in which they live.

Preventative health is an important focus for councils across the country and has the potential to have a significant impact on community health outcomes as well as alleviating obesity-related health costs.

As a sector, our focus on addressing Australia's obesity and mental health crisis is not from a medical perspective, but rather from a community-based health approach.

Our proposal is for a new financial support package of \$100 million over four years to be distributed through a local government place-based preventative health fund.

This fund would leverage our capacity to improve health outcomes in our communities, through healthier eating education initiatives, increased physical activity opportunities for children, and programs delivered with sport and recreation facilities and community groups.

PRIORITY 15

ARTS AND CULTURE

Commitment sought

\$120 million per year over four years to support the community arts and culture sectors impacted by COVID-19.

If funded:

Jobs created: 1,198

Contribution to annual GDP: \$153 million

What's the issue?

The COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted the community arts sector, with social distancing resulting in the cancellation of live events and visitor limits at facilities.

Why does it matter?

Arts, culture, and the creative industries are important economic drivers of tourism, regional economies, the night-time economy, and social cohesion.

Additional information

Local government plays an important role in the creative and visitor economies.

However, the closure of state borders and ongoing local lockdowns has had a significant impact on the arts sector.

Over the past two years, local governments have continued to keep their arts centres, museums and galleries open, even when it's meant incurring a financial loss. This is a particular issue in remote and regional areas where local governments are often the only body with the capacity to deliver arts and cultural events.

Councils have a strong track record of working collaboratively at the local level and can provide targeted delivery of strategic cultural and creative programs by expert personnel.

Councils need continuing support from other levels of government to ensure the sustainability of their arts and culture focus, yet have been largely ineligible for other federal arts recovery funding.

ATTACHMENT 1

PORTFOLIO AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Treasury

- ◆ **Priority 1** Financial Assistance Grants (once off injection)
- ◆ **Priority 2** Financial Assistance Grants (restore to at least 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue)
- ◆ **Priority 9** Affordable Housing

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

- ◆ **Priority 3** Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program
- ◆ **Priority 4** First and Last Mile Access
- ◆ **Priority 5** Roads to Recovery
- ◆ **Priority 6** Black Spot Program
- ◆ **Priority 7** South Australian Road Funding
- ◆ **Priority 8** Stronger Regional Digital Connectivity Package
- ◆ **Priority 15** Arts and Culture

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

- ◆ **Priority 10** Circular Economy
- ◆ **Priority 12** Climate change

Department of Home Affairs

- ◆ **Priority 11** Disaster mitigation

National Indigenous Australians Agency

- ◆ **Priority 13** Closing the Gap

Department of Health

- ◆ **Priority 14** Community Health