

1 December 2022

Employment Taskforce
Treasury
Langton Cres
Parkes ACT 2600
employmentwhitepaper@treasury.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission on the Terms of Reference for the Employment White Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Terms of Reference which will inform the development of the Employment White Paper. We welcome the development of the Employment White Paper and were pleased to participate in the recent job summit roundtables and the National Job Summit.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is pleased to support the Employment White Paper Terms of Reference, its objectives, scope and themes. ALGA also recognises the need for a robust roadmap for Australia to build a bigger, better-trained and more productive workforce – to boost incomes and living standards and create more opportunities for more Australians.

Our key recommendation is to ensure that the strength and the potential of the local government sector to stimulate and further contribute to local jobs and local productivity is recognised in the development of the Employment White Paper.

ALGA will be submitting a proposal to the Federal Government as part of our 2023-24 pre-budget submission, seeking funding support for local governments to employ more trainees and apprentices.

Our sector is able to contribute to many of the Terms of Reference for the development of the Employment White Paper and we would be pleased to facilitate roundtables between the Taskforce and representatives from our sector to further outline our ideas and solutions.

The Australian Local Government Association is the national voice of local government, representing 537 councils across the country. In structure, ALGA is a federation of state and territory local government associations.

Local governments collectively employ approximately 190,000 people in over 400 occupations, and in many regional and rural communities we are the largest employer. Local governments have a footprint in every community across Australia unlike other levels of government.

Australia's 537 local governments with more than 55 percent located in rural and regional Australia. Like many other sectors the local government sector is facing a jobs and skills crisis with around nine in ten local governments reporting skill shortages – an increase of 30% from just four years ago – and two-thirds of local governments have had local projects impacted or delayed as a result. ALGA would also be pleased if a geographic context is included in the scope of the white paper including labour supply, access to training and support services such as access to affordable housing, medical and education services.

With funding from the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts, we have just released a report on Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability (web link provided below). The survey identified where some of the specific gaps are, both in white-collar and operational positions. The top five skills shortages councils are seeing right now are Engineers, Urban and town planners, Building surveyors, Environmental health inspectors, and Human resources professionals.

Local governments have an important role in their own workforce development and that of their host regions. As the level of government closest to constituents, local governments are well placed to act as an anchor organisation in the community, supporting the economic benefits of harnessing talent and facilitating community cohesion. Local governments provide facilities and services that contribute to the liveability and quality of local places, making them attractive for future workers.

Local governments are also an incubator of local employment within their areas with trainees and apprenticeship schemes that employ young people and people with diverse backgrounds. Local governments also support employment within their local and regional communities, through procurement and investment in community infrastructure and economic development programs.

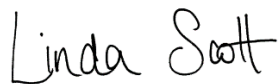
Local governments are already playing a key role in integrating climate solutions into local decision-making and in responding to the climate emergency, responding to natural disasters, improving infrastructure resilience and reducing carbon emissions in their jurisdictions.

We would also like to draw your attention to our own or commissioned research that covers issues pertaining to the local government workforce:

- ALGA (2022) [Submission to Productivity Commission Productivity Inquiry](#)
- ALGA (2021) [National State of the Assets Report](#)
- AEC and ALGA (2022) [Financial Assistance Grants](#)
- SGS Economics and Planning (2022) [Local Government Skills and Capability Survey](#) (separate reports are also available for each state/territory jurisdiction)
- SGS Economics and Planning (2022) [Final-Report-SGS-Research-Aug-2022.pdf](#) (alga.com.au) for ALGA

As outlined above, we would be pleased to facilitate a roundtable with your taskforce and representatives from the local government sector to outline further our contribution to the Employment White Paper. Please contact Liz de Chastel, Executive Director Policy on Ph 02 6122 9443 or email liz.dechastel@alga.asn.au to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Linda Scott
National President