



THE HON ANDREW GILES MP

MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Ref No: MC22-052880

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

Dear Cr Scott *Linda*

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 October 2022 concerning the resolutions from the 2022 National General Assembly of Local Government on refugees and asylum seekers. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring these matters to my attention and I apologise for the delay in responding.

As you are aware, the Australian Government has provided a permanent visa pathway to existing Temporary Protection visa (TPV) and Safe Haven Enterprise visa (SHEV) holders. This permanent visa pathway, through the permanent Resolution of Status (RoS) (subclass 851) visa, has been made available from 14 February 2023.

People granted a permanent RoS visa will be afforded the same rights and benefits as all permanent humanitarian residents. Providing a permanent visa pathway to existing TPV and SHEV holders will empower them to move forward with their lives and to more fully contribute to Australia, gain secure employment, grow businesses, study more easily, sponsor eligible family members under the family stream of the Migration Program to Australia and pursue a pathway to Australian citizenship.

The Government is committed to implementing this measure in an efficient and effective manner to ensure the majority of the caseload are granted a RoS visa within 12 months of processing commencement.

The Government remains committed to delivering orderly and legal pathways to Australia through robust migration and humanitarian programs. As such, the Government has committed to maintaining Operation Sovereign Borders, including regional processing arrangements. Under this approach, anyone who attempts to travel to Australia by boat without a valid visa will be turned back to their point of departure, returned to their home country, or transferred to a regional processing country for assessment of their protection claims.

Further information regarding the TPV/SHEV transition to permanent visas can be found on the Department of Home Affairs' website at: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/resolution-of-status-851#About>.

The Government is committed to compassionate and flexible Humanitarian and Settlement Programs that meet Australia's international protection obligations and position Australia as a global leader in international resettlement efforts.

Australia remains one of the most generous humanitarian resettlement countries in the world, with 13,750 places currently available under the 2022–23 Humanitarian Program. The Government aspires to progressively increase Australia's humanitarian intake.

There are 10,000 places allocated to Afghan nationals within the offshore Humanitarian Program between 2021-22 and 2024-25.

Further, an additional 16,500 places for Afghan nationals will be delivered over four years (4,125 places per year between 2022/23 – 2025/26) in addition to the annual Humanitarian Program intake. This brings the total number of places available to Afghan nationals to 31,500, which comprise 26,500 places under the Humanitarian Program and 5,000 under the Family stream of the Migration Program.

Afghan nationals are able to pursue a number of migration pathways to Australia depending on their circumstances, including through the Community Support Program, the Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot, the Family stream, and Skilled visa categories.

For more information about Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program please visit the Department's website at: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/refugee-and-humanitarian-program/about-the-program>.

Protection visa applicants who are granted an associated Bridging visa, which allows them to remain lawful in the community while their visa application is being processed, may have access to a range of services offered by the Government such as Medicare and the public health system, education for school aged children, assistance with finding employment, if they have work rights, translating and interpreting services, and if eligible, the Government's Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) Program.

The SRSS program supports non-citizens as they engage with the Department to resolve their immigration status including people who have lodged valid protection visas. The program provides targeted assistance to eligible clients, such as financial assistance, accommodation, access to health care, access to education for school aged children, case worker support and case management. Further information is available on the Department's website at: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/status-resolution-service/status-resolution-support-services>.

Thank you for raising these matters.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW GILES

 / 2023



The Hon Catherine King MP

**Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
Member for Ballarat**

Ref: MC22-008890

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

via: president@alga.asn.au

Dear Cr Scott

Thank you for your letter of 30 September 2022 regarding resolutions from the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) in June 2022. I understand that the Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and the Territories has responded separately. I apologise for the delay in responding.

In relation to those matters you have raised relevant to my portfolio responsibilities:

- In relation to Financial Assistance Grants and other Federal funding support for local government, the Australian Government continues to consider ways to work more closely with local government, notwithstanding our constrained fiscal environment. This includes *Roads to Recovery program* and the *Local Roads and Community Infrastructure* fund, with an additional \$250 million to Phase 4.
- In relation to regional development, the Federal Government announced in the October 2023 Budget \$1 billion for *the Growing Regions Program* and *the regional Precincts and Partnerships Program*. These new programs will deliver funding opportunities in partnership with local remote, rural and regional communities.
- In relation to changes to aviation regulation and policy, the Australian Government has committed to deliver an Aviation White Paper, which will deliver new long-term policy directions from growth and innovation in the aviation sector.

Thank you for taking the time to write and inform me of the outcomes from the ALGA NGA. I look forward to continuing to work with you to deliver for Australian communities.

Yours sincerely

Catherine King MP

23/3/2023

CC: Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and the Territories



**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

MC22-053292

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

Dear Cr Scott *Linda*

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2022 enclosing the Resolutions of the 28th National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government held in Canberra on 19-22 June 2022. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I appreciated the invitation to last year's NGA and the opportunity to speak to delegates. I was pleased to be involved in the discussions and the Australian Government continues to be supportive of the work of local governments and the national voice ALGA provides them.

Enclosed is a copy of the Resolution responses relevant to my portfolios of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Emergency Management.

Thank you again for providing me with an opportunity to respond to the NGA Resolutions and I look forward to continuing to partner with Australian Local Government Association to better support our local communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Watt'.

MURRAY WATT

24 / 4 / 2023

Enc Resolution responses

cc

The Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

The Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy

The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water

Responses to Resolutions of the 28th National General Assembly of Local Government relevant to the portfolios of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Emergency Management

Resolution 42 submitted by Balonne Shire Council, QLD

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to review current governance arrangements and commit appropriate levels of funding to provide improved operational and maintenance support to the owners of flood-warning infrastructure in order to minimise the impacts of natural disasters.

Resolution 42 response: The Australian Government notes Resolution 42 and welcomes projects to improve flood-warning infrastructure nominated by jurisdictions, noting that maintenance should remain the responsibility of the infrastructure owner. The repairs and restoration to infrastructure of this kind has been funded through extraordinary disaster support categories under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and other Commonwealth funded programs, such as the Emergency Response Fund, to enable communities to proactively reduce flood risk and increase resilience throughout their catchments.

Resolution 43 submitted by Newcastle City Council, NSW

1. This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with ALGA and state and territory governments to urgently develop an additional, apolitical funding stream which provides local governments with the resources needed to mitigate the current and longer-term impacts of extreme weather events on local physical and social infrastructure.

2. Recognises the significant influence of climate change in natural disasters and reaffirms its support of Australia's commitment to the Paris Agreement to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees.

Resolution 43 response: The Australian Government has passed legislation to establish the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) as the flagship measure to reduce disaster risks and improve resilience. The DRF will provide up to \$1 billion over five years to curb the devastating impacts of natural hazards in the longer-term by investing in important disaster prevention projects, including:

- Grey and green/blue **infrastructure** such as flood levees, floodways, seawalls, firebreaks, constructed wetlands and reefs and;
- **Systemic risk reduction** projects that improve the quality and impact of the response to future disasters.

Round One of the DRF opened for applications on 10 January 2023 and will close on 6 March 2023. Only states and territories can apply under Round One of the DRF, however each jurisdiction is expected to work closely with local governments and communities to identify suitable projects.

Addressing climate change is one of the biggest opportunities and challenges facing the agriculture sector and our regional communities. Reducing our emissions, building our resilience, adapting

practices, and developing new income streams will be crucial to ensuring the agriculture sector remains a major exporter and Australia's food and fibre is maintained for decades to come.

The Australian Government also acknowledges the important and unique insights local governments have in regard to the opportunities and challenges that face particular regions and towns, and is committed to forming strong and collaborative partnerships with you. The knowledge and experience that local government will be able to bring to the climate conversation will prove extremely valuable, particularly as the Australian Government seeks to support the agriculture sector respond to climate impacts while helping it reach its productivity and sustainability goals. This support includes:

- the \$8 million to the Australian Sustainable Seaweed Alliance to support seaweed research and industry development, including the commercialisation of asparagopsis for use as a low emissions feed supplement;
- over \$300 million in funding for the 15 Rural Research & Development Corporations, leveraging an additional \$500 million in industry levy collections, which supports RD&E into priority issues, including addressing the challenges and opportunities climate change presents for the agriculture sector;
- \$420 million allocated through the Future Drought Fund to date to support farmers and the agriculture sector to build their resilience to drought and climate risk;
- the National Soil Action Plan 2022-2027, which was recently released for public consultation. This Action Plan suggests priorities for the next five years that will help build a strong foundation for a nationally coordinated but locally adaptive approach to managing soil sustainably – as a critical national asset; and
- the new National Biosecurity Strategy, which seeks to respond to increasingly complex biosecurity risks, such as new pests and diseases, and the changing distribution of existing ones.

The Australian Government is also working closely with jurisdictions on agriculture and climate change. On 20 July this year, Agriculture Ministers affirmed a strong commitment to action on climate change, including a desire to show greater urgency pursuing the opportunities and addressing the challenges Australian agriculture faces from climate change. Senior officials were tasked to undertake a stocktake of current actions and initiatives underway and to come back to government on gaps and priorities. The Climate Change Task Group undertook the stocktake and found that there is a breadth of work currently happening, including on climate literacy and information, farm business, emissions reductions, and soil/carbon matter. The dedication to push forward an ambitious climate agenda and common themes of action across all jurisdictions is promising.

Resolution 43.1 submitted by Shire of Derby-West Kimberley, WA

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to

- 1. Commit to ensuring that building back resilient public infrastructure is a core element of disaster recovery funding arrangements at Commonwealth and jurisdiction level;*
- 2. Provide clear guidance on appropriate Standards for resilience for public infrastructure to support decisions regarding additional investment; and*
- 3. Commit to providing up-front funding to local governments that will enable counter disaster operations and reconstruction of essential public assets to proceed without financial impediments.*

Resolution 43.1 response:

I am pleased to advise the Australian Government has commissioned an Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and effective in the face of

increasingly frequent and more severe natural disasters. The Independent Review will consider how government investment in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery can better support a national system that makes our communities safer and builds resilience to the extreme weather events Australia is projected to experience.

The Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) are also currently being reviewed to address recommendations made by the former Council of Australian Governments and the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. The DRFA Review was established to: ensure equitable access to support so Australians impacted by disasters are treated more consistently and fairly; streamline processes so governments can respond quickly and appropriately to disasters; and encourage jurisdictions to build back better.

A key area of focus for the review is to explore how the DRFA can be used to generate greater investment in community resilience, including through infrastructure betterment. The next phase of work will also include work in a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing awareness and national consistency, improving administration and simplifying access to DRFA assistance.

Following a meeting of National Cabinet on 9 December 2022, a number of items were agreed relating to land-use planning. These are a significant step forward in protecting Australians from extreme weather events, with First Ministers agreeing that the days of developing on floodplains need to end. National Cabinet tasked the following:

- Planning Ministers will develop a national standard for considering disaster and climate risk, as part of land use planning and building reform processes, and report back to National Cabinet in 2023.
- Treasurers will consider ways to improve insurance affordability.

The Australian Government remains committed to building back essential public assets to a more resilient condition and has recently agreed to:

- \$312.5 million Roads and Regional Transport Infrastructure (betterment) fund for the Northern Rivers Region in NSW following the February/March 2022 floods;
- \$200 million Infrastructure betterment fund in NSW following the bushfires and floods in March 2021 and February/March 2022; and
- \$150 million Betterment Fund in Queensland following flooding in 2021-2022.

Resolution 43.2 submitted by Hawkesbury City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the NSW and Australian Governments to:

- 1. Establish Disaster Recovery Funds that can be immediately accessed by councils in the event of a natural disaster. The funds would be available to councils to undertake immediate emergency works, essential public asset reconstruction works, and immediate clean-up where applicable; and*
- 2. Update their natural disaster funding agreements to include reimbursement of project management costs to local councils and funding for dedicated infrastructure recovery staff for the next year.*

Resolution 43.2 response:

The Australian Government notes the resolution.

The Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding, which will also consider the DRFA Review, will involve an extensive consultation process across all levels of government, as well as with industry, businesses, community groups, and the not-for-profit sector. Accordingly, councils will

have an opportunity to raise concerns regarding access to disaster funding through the consultation process.

Through the DRFA Review, the Commonwealth is working with the states and territories to develop national DRFA advisories, which target early recovery activities and include information on eligibility and assurance requirements to enhance consistency and provide certainty regarding access to DRFA funding. Advisories will be developed for clean-up and debris removal, and emergency and immediate disaster reconstruction works, to ensure these activities can be undertaken without delay.

Resolution 43.3 submitted by Randwick City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:

- 1. Express solidarity with the many communities across Australia affected by devastating floods, storms, heatwaves, and fires caused by anthropogenic global warming in recent months and years;*
- 2. Provide urgent short and long-term disaster recovery funding and support to affected communities and councils;*
- 3. Fund and support local councils to develop comprehensive, in-place, recovery, rebuilding and resilience plans and strategies to improve the immediate response to increasingly catastrophic natural disasters; and*
- 4. Commit to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of 43 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.*

Resolution 43.3 response:

The Australian Government notes the resolutions and expresses unequivocal support and solidarity to communities across Australia impacted by the devastating and compounding natural disasters in recent months and years.

The Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding will provide an opportunity to review our broader national disaster funding arrangements, including for resilience. As noted above, the DRFA Review is also looking at how recovery arrangements could be used to generate greater investment in community resilience.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring communities and councils can get back on their feet following natural disasters and have offered a range of supports to facilitate this, including through jointly funded \$1 million DRFA grants to councils. Following the flooding in 2021 and early 2022, 73 councils in NSW and 24 Queensland received the \$1 million council grants. The Australian Government has committed to cost-share over \$3 billion in funding for NSW following the February/March 2022 floods, over \$2 billion for Queensland for the Feb-April floods 2022 and over \$56 million for Tasmania for the floods in October 2022.

In September 2022, the Albanese Government legislated Australia's emissions reduction target of 43 per cent and net zero emissions by 2050.

I understand that sub-resolutions 3 and 4 have also been sent to my colleagues the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, and the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water, for consideration.

Resolution 43.4 submitted by Northern Midlands Council, TAS

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider the provision of an annual budget allocation to local government to contribute to modelling and mitigation works to reduce the risk of flood or other natural disasters.

Resolution 43.5 submitted by City of Darwin, NT

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to partner with local government on a national program of urgent priority mitigation work to address anticipated major or catastrophic damage to existing essential community infrastructure linked to contemporary climate change modelling to 2050.

Resolution 43.6 submitted by Yarra City Council, VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish a joint reform process to proactively plan for and seek to mitigate the impacts of flooding, including a review of relevant planning controls, flooding overlays, strategies, and the ability of existing infrastructure to respond to the impacts of climate change; and establish funding stream/s to facilitate this process and implement flood mitigation works.

Resolutions 43.4; 43.5 and 43.6 response: The Australian Government notes Resolutions 43.4, 43.5 and 43.6, and is delivering the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) as the flagship measure to reduce disaster risks and improve resilience. The DRF will provide up to \$1 billion over five years for mitigation measures, and will seek co-contributions from jurisdictions.

The DRF will fund both grey and blue-green infrastructure projects, and those improving systemic disaster risk reduction outcomes, including better planning, data and decision-making. The Australian Government welcomes the central role local government has in developing and delivering projects of all sizes across Australia.

Round One of the DRF is open for applications between 10 January 2023 and 6 March 2023. NEMA has commenced planning for Round Two of the DRF. Feedback and outcomes from Round One and continued consultation with local governments will inform the design of the DRF into the future.

The Australian Government has also commenced the Hazards Insurance Partnership. This landmark partnership brings together industry and government to share information on disaster risk will allow us to better target mitigation. There will be opportunities within this partnership for local government participation.

Resolution 46 submitted by East Gippsland Shire, VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to expand the scope, reduce the evidence required, implement fairer, and more consistent, processes between states for seeking funding under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Resolution 46 response:

The Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding will provide an opportunity to review our national disaster funding arrangements, including for recovery.

Through the DRFA Review, a range of initiatives are being undertaken to enhance national consistency, including developing pre-agreed off-the-shelf Category C/D recovery packages,

enhancing national consistency under Categories A and B, reviewing terminology and definitions, developing national eligibility advisories to enhance awareness, and improving reporting, data sharing, monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Work is also being undertaken to develop national guidance on DRFA audit and assurance to improve DRFA administration and help to ensure state and territory DRFA financial claims include the necessary supporting information.

Resolution 46.1 submitted by Shoalhaven City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to protect communities against critical power loss during natural disasters through the delivery of a targeted program to support the installation of stand-alone power systems (SAPS) in at-risk communities.

Resolution 46.1 response: The Australian Government notes this Resolution. This may be a future consideration for hardening of infrastructure and critical systems, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. Therefore, I have referred this to my colleague the Hon Catherine King MP, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, to respond to the Resolution submitted by the Shoalhaven City Council.

Resolution 47 submitted by Forbes Shire Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government and Insurance Council of Australia to lobby for property insurance policies to retain a compulsory nominated amount to ensure the satisfactory demolition of the structure to better protect the public from ongoing derelict sites.

Resolution 47 response: The Australian Government notes Resolution 47 on accounting for demolition in insurance policies. The Australian Government recognises the importance of appropriate insurance in supporting recovery and ongoing resilience. The Australian Government has also commenced the Hazards Insurance Partnership. This landmark partnership brings together industry and government to share information on disaster risk will allow us to better target mitigation. There will be opportunities within this partnership for local government participation.

Resolution 48 submitted by Shire of Morawa, WA

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government:

1. *To request that all state and territory governments fully implement recommendations 11.1 and 11.2 of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements and provide further resources and assistance to local governments to increase their capacity and capability to effectively discharge the considerable emergency management responsibilities devolved to them.*
2. *To provide leadership and coordination to state and territory governments in responding to recommendations 11.1 and 11.2 of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disasters.*

Resolution 48.1 submitted by Shoalhaven City Council, NSW

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. This will ensure a national response to emergencies that will facilitate our communities' resilience following disasters, in particular, more effective and faster responses from the Australian Defence Force.

Resolutions 48 and 48.1 response: The Australian Government notes the Resolution 48 and 48.1 provided by the National General Assembly. The *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements* recommendations 11.1 and 11.2 propose that jurisdictions continue to have primary responsibility for emergency management and resource sharing arrangements within their jurisdiction. The Australian Government will continue to play a strong enabling and coordination role and is committed to working with local governments and jurisdictions to better target resources and assistance to areas of greatest need.

The Australian Government, through the establishment of National Emergency Management Agency, is driving the implementation of *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements* recommendations.

The Australian Government acknowledges this enhanced role in coordinating federal, state, territory, and local council responses to emergencies, which is achieved through the following mechanisms:

- The Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF) outlines the Australian Government's approach to preparing for, responding to and recovering from crises. Its objectives are to protect human life and critical infrastructure; support the continuity of every day activity; and protect property and the natural environment.
- The National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) which is embedded in and is an integral part of the AGCMF. The NCM is an effective mechanism to manage the consequences of complex crises, and is hazard and vector agnostic. The NCM uses the convening authority of the Australian Government to bring together a broad range of stakeholders (including state, territory and local governments) to identify crises, scope options to mitigate or stabilise and tasks and coordinates actions.

The Australian Government also coordinates and facilitates international fire support and interstate deployments via the National Resource Sharing Centre through its established partnerships and national arrangements, authorised by the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee.

The Australian Government is investigating the role of the ADF in responding to natural disasters and what non-defence capabilities could provide appropriate supplementation and support.

Resolution 49 submitted by Newcastle City Council, NSW

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. This relief would include:

- 1. Initiatives targeting the tourism and creative industries;*
- 2. An evaluation of and response to the youth and gender impacts of COVID-19;*
- 3. Initiatives that will boost jobs and long-term community resilience to climate; and*
- 4. Restoration of funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants to a level equal to at least 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue.*

Resolution 49 response: The Australian Government is committed to supporting people in rural and regional Australia, noting the impact of compounding impacts of hazards.

The Australian Government has provided funding of \$61.6 million between 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024 to the Rural Financial Counselling Service to provide free financial counselling to farmers, fishing enterprises, forestry growers and harvesters, and small related businesses experiencing, or at risk of, financial hardship.

The Future Drought Fund also funds climate and social capital initiatives to build community resilience to drought. Further, the Disaster Ready Fund will fund initiatives that strengthen community and economic resilience.

The Financial Assistance Grant Program to Local Government is administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts and provides \$2.9 billion in untied funding under the program. Therefore, I have referred this to my colleague the Hon Catherine King MP, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, to respond to part 4 of this Resolution submitted by the Newcastle City Council.



The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP
Minister for Early Childhood Education
Minister for Youth

Reference: MC22-004965

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

By email: alga@alga.asn.au

Dear Cr Scott

Thank you for your correspondence of 30 September 2022 in relation to the resolutions considered by the National General Assembly of Local Government at its July 2022 meeting. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring the relevant resolutions to my attention.

The Australian Government is committed to improving our early childhood education and care (ECEC) system, to ensure that all Australian children have the best possible start in life and that parents are supported to work, train or study. To that end, the Government will implement new measures designed to improve the ECEC system and make early learning and care more accessible and affordable for Australian families.

The Government has committed to reduce the cost of ECEC and to support working families to get ahead. As part of the election, the Government announced its Cheaper Child Care policy to make ECEC more affordable for around 96 per cent of Australian families using early learning and care services – around 1.26 million families.

From July 2023, the Government will lift the maximum Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rate to 90 per cent for families earning \$80,000 or less and increase CCS rates for families earning less than \$530,000. The Government will also retain higher rates of subsidy for families with two or more children aged five years or under in care.

Supporting the early childhood workforce to provide children with access to high-quality ECEC is a priority for the Government. Central to this is the need to build the recognition that early childhood educators and early childhood teachers are valued as professionals with exciting and rewarding career pathway opportunities.

To address the long-term and persistent workforce issues in the ECEC sector, you may be aware that the ECEC sector collaborated with state and territory and the Australian governments to develop the 10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy (Strategy) which was released in October 2021. The Strategy includes practical actions aimed at supporting the attraction, development and retention of a high-quality early childhood workforce.

To support the Strategy, a co-designed Implementation and Evaluation Plan was released by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority on 5 September 2022. The plan commits governments and the sector to implementing the Strategy's actions to achieve long-term change for the sector's workforce. You can review the Strategy and the plan at www.acecqa.gov.au/national-workforce-strategy.

Thank you for writing to me on your proposals to support youth employment (Resolution 87). The Government is committed to supporting young people in developing the knowledge, skills and capabilities needed to attain secure employment. The Government delivers a range of employment programs and initiatives to support youth at the national and local levels. Enclosed, I have outlined those which are most relevant to your proposals.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Dr Anne Aly

30/1 / 2022

Encl.

Create a local youth jobs program at the local government level and provide incentives for local employers to deliver well paid, meaningful, secure work for local youth.

Workforce Australia and the Workforce Australia – Transition to Work service operate across all local areas, excluding remote areas, to support youth into employment.

Workforce Australia

Workforce Australia is the Government’s mainstream employment service. Workforce Australia consists of online employment services and mainstream employment services delivered by a network of providers for individuals with vocational or non-vocational barriers to finding employment, as well as a range of other targeted programs.

Through Workforce Australia Online Services, job-ready individuals, including young people, are able to self-service through a range of online tools. All individuals in the Online Services channel are supported, via phone or email, and through the department’s dedicated Digital Services contact centre.

Workforce Australia Provider Services are delivered through a network of employment service providers who provide intensive case management support to individuals that need a higher level of assistance to become job ready. Providers are able to offer a multitude of pre-employment supports to young people including education, coaching and training, mental health and assistance to address transport barriers. Providers also help individuals manage their mutual obligations.

Workforce Australia service providers have the discretion to fund employment pathway initiatives subject to conditions and funding limits. Workforce Australia providers can be found at www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/coaching/providers.

Workforce Australia – Transition to Work

Transition to Work is the youth specialist employment service within Workforce Australia. It supports disadvantaged young people aged 15–24 who are most at risk of long-term unemployment, including early school leavers, Indigenous youth and those with significant vocational and non-vocational barriers. The Transition to Work eligibility criteria has been expanded under Workforce Australia to ensure more disadvantaged young people receive the support they need from youth specialist providers. As a result of the expansion Transition to Work is expected to service an annual average caseload of over 38,000, up from around 28,000 in 2021–22. Under this program, young people receive pre-employment and employment support and career guidance to develop appropriate skills and attributes to find work (including apprenticeships or traineeships) or re-engage in education.

Transition to Work providers work with local community, education organisations and employers to build networks and opportunities for participants. The current model is designed to enable and incentivise upfront investment in young people. Transition to Work has an overarching Performance and Quality Framework tailored to reflect the nature of this service and focused on ensuring employers and individuals receive a quality service that meets their needs. Further information can be found at www.dewr.gov.au/transition-work.

Workforce Australia – Youth Bonus Wage subsidies

The demand driven Youth Bonus wage subsidy of up to \$10,000 is available to businesses that hire eligible young people into ongoing jobs. This includes disadvantaged participants aged 15–24 who are serviced by a provider in Workforce Australia Services, and participants aged 15–26 with Mutual Obligation Requirements in Transition to Work.

Further information can be found at www.dewr.gov.au/wage-subsidies.

Establish a youth employment facilitator in each local government area and provide a local youth employment recovery fund for each local government area.

Workforce Australia – Local Jobs Program

You may be aware of the Local Jobs Program which is a place-based initiative that supports local, tailored approaches to reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways for individuals in a range of cohorts, including youth, and to meet the needs of local businesses. Employment Facilitators support the delivery of the Local Jobs Program across 51 Employment Regions and work with local stakeholders, through a Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce, to establish and implement a Local Jobs Plan for each region. Taskforces have representation from key local stakeholders such as employer representatives, Chambers of Commerce, education and training providers, social support organisations, employment services providers, and local and state government. A number of these stakeholders work with or represent the youth in their local area.

The Employment Facilitator works with the Taskforce and other local stakeholders to develop solutions to support people, including young people, into work or training by putting local employer needs at the centre of their actions and addressing the employment barriers of local job seekers. The Local Jobs Program also includes a Local Recovery Fund that supports locally driven initiatives that meet the priorities identified in the Local Jobs Plan and are tailored to the opportunities and needs identified in each region. A large proportion of the activities already established through this fund support young job seekers.

Other career supports that are available to young people.

Workforce Australia – Employability Skills Training

Workforce Australia – Employability Skills Training enhances the work readiness of individuals, including young people by equipping them to understand and meet the expectations of employers during the recruitment process and in the workplace. It helps individuals gain advanced job search skills and pursue employment opportunities in their local labour market. Employability Skills Training also provides industry focused training to help individuals learn about local industries, the skills they need, and how to get a job in an industry that interests them. Further information can be found at www.dewr.gov.au/employability-skills-training.

Workforce Australia – Youth Advisory Sessions

Youth Advisory Sessions is an initiative that offers young people aged 15–24 who are participating in Workforce Australia Online Services access to up to three one-on-one coaching sessions with a Transition to Work provider. Sessions are tailored to meet the needs of the young person and may include topics such as interview preparation assistance; career advice; help to connect with education, training, or other Government assistance; support to maintain resilience while looking for work; and more. Further information can be found at www.dewr.gov.au/youth-advisory-sessions.



The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Minister for the Arts
Leader of the House

Reference: MC22-045809

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

By email: alga@alga.asn.au

Dear Councillor Scott

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 October 2022 regarding cultural and workforce related resolutions by the National General Assembly of Local Government. I understand that you have written to a number of my ministerial colleagues. This response focuses on my portfolio responsibilities.

In the Arts and Culture portfolio, my priority is to deliver a National Cultural Policy for all Australians. This landmark new policy will be shaped around the 5 goals of *Creative Australia*, launched by the then prime minister, the Hon Julia Gillard in 2013. Since commencing consultation on 1 July 2022, the Australian Government has held 16 town halls attended by over 800 people and received over 1,200 submissions. The National Cultural Policy will be a broad, comprehensive roadmap and will drive investment decisions going forward, providing the foundation for a better future for our creatives and for every Australian.

I expect the new policy will acknowledge the important role of engagement between all levels of government to deliver great outcomes for this sector, and I would like to acknowledge and thank you for your participation in the cultural ministers meeting in Adelaide on 31 October 2022. I welcomed the opportunity to meet in-person with you and valued your contributions on the challenges and opportunities we face in the arts and cultural sectors, particularly during the discussion on First Nations arts and culture.

The Federal Budget provided immediate support to artists and arts organisations to deliver high-quality programs to diverse audiences, to build new networks and partnerships, and to equip emerging talent with the skills to take their careers to the next level. It also included investment across a broad range of portfolios, including providing \$80 million for the National Art Gallery in Alice Springs, \$50 million for Perth's Aboriginal Cultural Centre, and \$13 million to the Burnie Cultural Precinct. Further funding decisions for the sector will be set out in the new National Cultural Policy.

Turning to my Employment and Workplace Relations responsibilities, the Government is mindful of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as longer-term underlying workforce pressures as we implement our agenda.

I appreciate your constructive participation in the recent Jobs and Skills Summit. As a result of consensus reached at the Summit, the Government agreed to 36 immediate initiatives and also laid out priorities for further work and future action. Importantly, this includes reducing barriers to employment and advancement so that all Australians benefit from a strong economy.

I encourage you and your members to continue to engage in this important national conversation through the Employment White Paper process, which will provide a roadmap for Australia to build a bigger, better-trained and more productive workforce. While submissions for the Employment White Paper will close 30 November 2022, there will be further opportunities to contribute over the next 12 months.

The newly established agency Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) will provide the evidence and analysis needed to support all levels of government to address workforce challenges. The Government's investment of \$12.9 million in the Budget will support JSA to inform effective strategies to tackle skills shortages and plan for the workforce of the future. JSA and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations are working together on how to collaborate on skills and workforce change.

The previous government's Workforce Australia employment services system was launched on 1 July 2022 including a new online service and a network of providers to deliver personalised support to those who need, or would like, additional help. Workforce Australia Employment Services providers are required to individually tailor their servicing to reflect the circumstances and specific needs of each participant. In certain locations there are also specialist providers available with expertise to deliver personalised services to specific disadvantaged cohorts.

The Government has established a House Select Committee inquiry into Workforce Australia Employment Services. The Committee will examine the first 12 months of the new Workforce Australia system and has committed to review all aspects of the program including the implementation, performance and appropriateness. The Committee will report on the extent to which services are delivered in a way that is fair, leaves no one behind, respects individuals' diverse needs, and supports job seekers into secure work, in particular, its support for long term unemployed and young people. The Committee has also resolved to include pre-employment and complementary programs within the scope of its inquiry, and to specifically consider the role of ParentsNext in providing early intervention services to disadvantaged parents as part of the employment services system. The Committee will conduct a number of public hearings and will seek submissions from stakeholders as part of this process, and I would encourage you and your members to participate. The Committee will provide its final report to Parliament by 29 September 2023.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



THE HON TONY BURKE MP

28/11/2022



**The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care**

Ref No: MC22-019369

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

Dear Ms Scott *Linda*

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 October 2022 regarding resolutions from the 2022 National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government.

The Australian Government understands your concerns and is committed to improving the access, quality, and sustainability of health services for all Australians. Addressing inequities in access to high quality medical and aged care in Australia has been a longstanding challenge and is the focus of a broad range of Government initiatives.

I welcome the views of the Australian Local Government Association and recognise there is a need to move towards innovative solutions that enable Government and health organisations to work together to develop locally responsive solutions. I offer the following comments in respect to the resolutions conveyed to me.

Health care worker shortages and access to health services in regional, rural and remote areas

There is no doubt that access to primary care around Australia needs to improve. The fact that only about 15% of young medical graduates are choosing a career in general practice highlights the challenges facing the sector. Increasing the number of doctors choosing to become GPs and improving the health of general practice more broadly is the Government's highest priority within the Health Portfolio.

To address these issues the Government has established a Strengthening Medicare Taskforce that will report back to Government by the end of December 2022. The Government has committed \$750 million over three years from the Strengthening Medicare Fund to deliver the highest priority investments in primary care. The Government will also provide \$220 million in grants to primary care practices to improve their capacity to provide quality care to patients.

The Government will deliver \$146 million in new initiatives to provide regional and rural Australia with more doctors, more rural generalists and more team-based care, and to ensure full use of the existing health workforce. This includes \$35 million to trial new innovative models of primary care in rural and remote areas.

The Government also provides funding for programs and incentives to support the recruitment and retention of GPs in rural and remote areas.

A comprehensive list of programs and incentives for which medical professionals or may be eligible for can be found at www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/incentives-and-support-for-gps-and-general-practices-in-modified-monash-5-locations.

Workforce undersupply and maldistribution is also a strong current focus for the health portfolio, I would like to highlight some of the measures that are proposed or being undertaken to find solution to these issues.

The Health Workforce Taskforce (HWT) was established in August 2022 and includes representatives from each jurisdiction. Working under the direction of the Health Chief Executives Forum, the HWT is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of a suite of short-, medium and long-term strategies to ensure there is a sufficient and sustainable current and future health workforce to meet the healthcare needs of Australians, with consideration to issues of workforce shortages and maldistribution. The HWT also considers the implementation the National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021-2031 (NMWS) as part of its workplan. The NMWS will guide long-term collaborative medical workforce planning across Australia. It identifies achievable, practical actions to build a sustainable, highly trained medical workforce.

The NMWS seeks to promote general practice as an attractive career path and provide medical students and early career doctors with positive experiences of general practice and primary care to encourage increased uptake of this profession. The NMWS also seeks to shift the balance between generalists and subspecialists back towards generalists. This includes growing the number of GPs and rural generalists and increasing opportunities and recognition for doctors to supplement their skills and broaden their scope of practice, ultimately enabling doctors to adjust their scope of practice to meet changing service needs, and to work more effectively in regional and rural areas.

International medical graduate supervision

The Medical Board of Australia (MBA) is responsible for all aspects relating to the regulation of the medical profession in Australia. The MBA is supported in its role by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) which is jointly overseen by all Australian Health Ministers under complementary legislation enacted in each jurisdiction.

When deciding the level of supervision required by an international medical graduate (IMG), the MBA has specific regard to the skills, qualification and experience of the IMG and any assessment of the IMG provided by the Australian Medical Council and the relevant specialist medical colleges. Factors that may influence the MBA's decisions are addressed in its Guidelines – Supervised practice for IMGs. The MBA's Guidelines have been in force since January 2016 and are accessible through the MBA's website at www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/International-Medical-Graduates/Supervision.aspx.

Mental Health

In 2022, the Commonwealth and all states and territories entered into a National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (National Agreement), representing an important first step to reforming Australia's mental health and suicide prevention system.

The National Agreement aims to achieve systemic, whole-of-government reform to deliver a comprehensive, coordinated, consumer-focused mental health and suicide prevention system with joint accountability across all governments.

People living in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia have been identified as a priority population for measures progressed under the National Agreement. It also includes commitments from all governments to ensure the particular mental health needs of Australia's rural, regional and remote communities are equitably addressed.

Under the National Agreement, governments also agreed to develop and implement the 10-year National Mental Health Workforce Strategy, which will consider the quality, supply, distribution, and structure of the mental health workforce in a range of settings including regional, rural and remote communities.

The Government also has subsidised Medicare support for mental health treatment under the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the Medicare Benefits Schedule initiative (Better Access), patients can currently access up to 20 individual psychological sessions (a temporary increase of 10 sessions until 31 December 2022 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic) and up to 10 group sessions per calendar year.

An evaluation of Better Access is due for completion in December 2022. The evaluation will examine whether Better Access is meeting its objectives of increasing access to mental health care and improving patient outcomes. The evaluation is supported by a Clinical Advisory Group, comprised of clinical and other experts, and a Stakeholder Engagement Group with representatives from professional bodies, organisations representing priority populations and people with lived experience of mental illness. It will therefore contribute to a robust and comprehensive evidence base to help inform future arrangements under Better Access.

The National Agreement recognises that collaboration is required across sectors, jurisdictions and governments to deliver responses that effectively meet the mental health and suicide prevention needs of different population groups. The bilateral schedules under the National Agreement outline funding commitments to implement and deliver specific initiatives at a state-level and allow for regional variability in the delivery of those initiatives.

The Government also funds Primary Health Networks to plan and commission regionally appropriate mental health and suicide prevention services, so a range of service types are available to suit local population needs. This includes prioritising the needs of priority populations including culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Young Australians continue to be a focus of our investment in mental health to support them to reach their full potential. headspace is the primary national platform for provision of services to young people aged 12-25 experiencing, or at risk, of mild to moderate mental illness. The network of headspace services provides holistic care in four key areas - mental health, related physical health, substance misuse, and social and vocational support. As of 27 October 2022, there are 152 headspace services operating nationally, including across regional Australia (RA2-RA5). Further commitments are in place to grow the network to 170 services by 2025-26.

To support improved access to youth mental health services in regional and remote Australia, a number of innovative programs are funded, including:

- The Flying headspace program, which provides mental health outreach services to young people living in six remote communities in South Australia where service access is limited.

- Culturally safe, co-designed outreach services for young people in 10 remote Western New South Wales communities, and the Yulara and Mutitjulu communities in the Northern Territory.
- The headspace Pilbara service which delivers a new, flexible model of headspace services for young people in Western Australia's Pilbara region through outreach and community engagement.

For young people unable to attend a headspace service, eheadspace provides free, telephone and web-based support services to young people aged 12-25 years with, or at risk of developing mental illness. Further information on eheadspace is available online at www.headspace.org.au or on 1800 650 890.

Through the eheadspace platform, headspace also offers the Digital Work and Study (DWS) Program. The DWS Program aims to improve education and employment outcomes of over 1,850 young Australians aged 15-25 with mental health challenges by providing work and study support via eheadspace. Services are integrated with clinical mental health care, helping young Australians stay on track in their education and training and prepare them for the workforce.

Aged Care

Finding solutions to the challenges currently being experienced in the aged care sector is a priority for the Government. The Government has a range of measures in place to build and strengthen the aged care workforce.

The Government has supported aged care workers' calls for better pay with a submission to the ongoing Fair Work Commission work value case and funding its outcome. We know we need to treat this vital work with respect and reward it with better pay.

The Government has implemented a series of skills and training initiatives for the aged care workforce, including Fee Free TAFE to support training new and existing aged care workers, and 20,000 new university places to prioritise opportunities for under-represented groups, focusing on areas of national priority or skills needs, such as nursing. Other workforce initiatives currently underway include:

- The Workforce Advisory Service - a free, independent and confidential service with places available to support residential and home care service providers with best practice advice on attracting, retaining and skilling their workforce.
- The Home Care Workforce Support Program to attract and train 13,000 new aged care workers for the home care sector.
- The Aged Care Transition to Practice Program to support around 1,400 new aged care nurses with training and professional development.
- The Clinical Placements Program to provide 5,250 nursing students with the opportunity to undertake high-quality clinical placements in the care and support sector.
- Scholarships to support undergraduate and postgraduate study for aged care for nurses, personal care workers and allied health professionals.
- Options for increasing the supply of overseas key workers, such as personal care workers, are also being considered, including through the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme.

The health of all Australian's is a key priority for the government I hope you found the information provided above useful.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Mark Butler

8 / 11 / 2022

cc: The Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health
The Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government
and Territories



Julie Collins MP

**Minister for Housing
Minister for Homelessness
Minister for Small Business**

Ref: MC22-011579

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

Dear Councillor Scott

Thank you for your email dated 13 October 2022, and your submission of resolutions from the 2022 National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government.

I would like to thank each local government who submitted a motion relevant to housing and homelessness at this year's NGA, as well as for the meeting and dialogue.

Like you, the Albanese Government understands access to secure and affordable housing has significant social, economic and personal benefits. Safe and affordable housing is central to the security and dignity of all Australians.

As you would know, the Albanese Government is working to deliver 40,000 new social and affordable homes and has committed to implementing a number of initiatives to help Australian households more easily access safe and affordable housing. These initiatives includes a:

- new National Housing Accord (The Accord);
- \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund;
- National Help to Buy shared equity scheme;
- National Housing Supply and Affordability Council; and
- National Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Investment returns from the Housing Australia Future Fund will be used to build 30,000 social and affordable homes within its first five years, made up of around:

- 20,000 social housing properties, of which 4,000 will be allocated for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness
- 10,000 affordable homes for frontline workers like police, nurses and cleaners

I also want to thank ALGA for its constructive role in the discussion and agreement of the new Housing Accord, which lays out a plan for the Albanese Government to work with states and territories, local government, investors and the construction sector to improve housing supply and affordability.

The Accord includes \$350 million from the Commonwealth over 5 years from 2024-25 to support an additional 10,000 affordable homes, on top of the 30,000 social and affordable homes committed under the Housing Australia Future Fund. State and territory governments have agreed to build up to 10,000 new homes as well, delivering up to 20,000 new affordable dwellings in total.

The National Housing and Homelessness Plan will set out the key short, medium and longer term reforms needed to improve housing and homelessness outcomes across the spectrum and will be developed with the assistance of key stakeholders including local, state and territory governments, not for profit and civil society organisations, industry bodies, superannuation funds and experts in housing, finance and urban development.

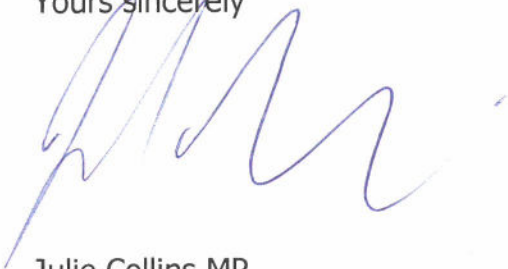
The Albanese Government brought forward the new Regional First Home Buyer Guarantee, which commenced in October this year, to support more first home buyers in regional Australia.

To support its commitments and unlock funding immediately, we will also expand the remit of the National Housing Infrastructure Facility, to make up to \$575 million available to more directly invest in social and affordable housing.

As the Albanese Government moves to develop and implement its housing agenda, there will be opportunities for stakeholder participation, which will allow councils and ALGA to put forward ideas.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and sharing the housing and homelessness resolutions from this year's NGA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie Collins', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Julie Collins MP

7/11/2022



The Hon Kristy McBain MP

Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
Member for Eden-Monaro

Ref: MC22-008848

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

via: president@alga.asn.au

Dear Cr Scott *Linda,*

Thank you for your letter of 30 September 2022 on the resolutions from the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) on 18-20 June 2022.

I note you also wrote to the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, and the Hon Tony Burke MP, in his capacity as both the Minister for the Arts and the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Both Ministers will respond separately to you on the resolutions relating to their portfolios.

As you know, I am deeply passionate about elevating the voice of local government across national conversations, and using my privileged ministerial position to help ensure sustainable investment and strong cross-jurisdictional relationships.

My response to the ALGA resolutions specific to my portfolio is attached. I note this year Australian councils are especially focused on workforce capability, and disaster resilience, management, and mitigation. With respect to the former, I trust the work we have done together on the *Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey 2022* will go some way to illuminating the depth and breadth of the issues faced and some solutions we might consider.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will provide a response to Resolution 99, which seeks to change Australia's posture on the United Nations Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Response to the ALGA 2022 NGA motions

From the Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and the Territories

The Australian Government values the contribution councils make to Australian communities and welcomes their ideas. We are committed to a strong partnership between jurisdictions and a collaborative approach to identify and respond to the challenges of our nation. I am working closely with my colleagues across portfolios to ensure we continue to translate the priorities of local governments and other key stakeholders into sustainable, liveable and equitable communities across Australia.

1. In relation to Resolutions 25, 25.1, 26, 26.1, 27, 27.1, which seek **Regional Development Measures**:

The 2022-23 Budget establishes a coherent and purposeful approach to investing in regional Australia. By focusing on productive investments, the government is empowering regional Australia to grow local economies, improve liveability, and enhance productivity.

Through this Budget, \$1.0 billion will be provided for the **Growing Regions Program** and the regional **Precincts and Partnerships Program** to ensure local voices are central in identifying what their communities need to prosper.

The **Growing Regions Program** will provide new opportunities for regional local councils and not-for-profit organisations to access funding through an open, competitive grants process. The regional **Precincts and Partnerships Program** will provide a strategic, nationally consistent mechanism for funding and coordinating larger-scale projects.

In addition, the Budget is delivering on our election commitments across regional Australia.

The \$349.9 million **Investing in Our Communities Program** will deliver our election commitments for projects under \$5 million and the \$1.0 billion **Priority Community Infrastructure Program** will deliver election commitments over \$5 million.

The Government will provide \$9.6 billion to deliver its election commitments, including the delivery of **significant and transformative priority investments** in regional Australia, like Cairns Marine Precinct, the investment in Middle Arm, logistics hubs in northern and central Australia, enabling infrastructure in the Pilbara, the Central Australia Plan and key highways in Tasmania and South Australia.

2. In relation to Resolutions 19, 19.1, 20, 21, 28, 28.1, 29, 30, 30.1, 31 and 49, which seek action on transitioning to **renewable energy**:

The Australian Government has given considerable thought to the question of energy supply in its **Powering Australia Plan**.

The **National Electric Vehicle Strategy** is just one element of this wider plan that seeks to reduce transport emissions through electrification. We also have the \$20 billion **Rewiring the Nation policy**, which aims to rebuild and modernise Australia's electricity grids to ensure they can handle more renewable energy, and includes a partnership to jointly fund

disaster volunteer workforce by covering the uplift costs associated with recruitment, deployment, equipment and training.

Established on 1 September 2022, the **National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)** brings together disaster response, recovery and risk reduction efforts and is at the forefront of ensuring Australian communities are better prepared for future disasters. NEMA is also responsible for a number of individual measures that support recovery, including the \$150 million recovery and post-disaster resilience component of the Emergency Response Fund, with the funding in 2022-23 informed by the **Floods Package – Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative**.

4. In relation to Resolutions 49 and 74, which seek investments to boost **Skills and Employment**:

The Australian Government is committed to working in partnership across jurisdictions to address some of Australia's most pressing challenges, including workforce shortages and education gaps. This was especially apparent in the lead-up to and on the days of the **2022 Jobs and Skills Summit**, which we are pleased involved strong engagement with your organisation and state and Northern Territory associations.

Feedback from the Summit and our work on the *2022 Local Government Skills and Capability Workforce Survey* indicate there are multiple drivers exacerbating skills shortages across Australia and especially in regional and rural areas. These shortages are aggravated further by challenges specific to housing affordability and availability, insufficient and inflexible training facilities and career pathways, substantially increased construction costs and availability of construction materials and workforce, persistently lower wages in the regions, and global competition for skilled workers across industries.

Such a complicated set of factors will require a suite of sustainable solutions over a longer period of time; solutions that can position regions to transition to a renewable energy future.

The Albanese Government's October 2022 Budget seeks to begin this work through:

- An increase to the **permanent Migration Program planning level** to 195,000 migrants in 2022-23 to ease widespread, critical skills shortages.
- More than doubling of **planning levels for permanent regional visas and for state and territory nominated visas**, to help address workforce shortages in regional areas, including for small businesses.
- A \$12.9 million commitment over three years to establish **Jobs and Skills Australia**, an independent agency that will bring together state and territory governments, industry, employers, unions and education providers to address workplace shortages and skills and training needs.
- The delivery of **480,000 fee-free TAFE places**.
- A \$50 million **TAFE Technology Fund** to modernise TAFEs.
- The provision of **20,000 additional university places** for disadvantaged Australians.
- The provision of \$474.5 million over two years to **support student well-being** and improve classrooms.



The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
Minister for Skills and Training

Reference: MC22-045538

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

By email: alga@alga.asn.au

Dear Councillor

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 October 2022 regarding the skills and training related resolutions from the 2022 National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government.

As you know, Australia is experiencing significant skills shortages across many sectors, exacerbated by COVID-19 and 10 years of policy neglect. This challenge is underscored by the NGA's resolutions and is certain to be felt sharply by local governments across Australia.

The Albanese Government is delivering on its commitment to build a stronger economy and help give more Australians the skills and training they need by honouring our key election commitments.

The recent federal budget delivers funding for a \$1 billion (12-month) National Skills Agreement to accelerate the delivery of 180,000 Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education places and support for students from January 2023. This will help address the skills gap in our economy and increase opportunities and workforce participation of priority groups, including First Nations people, women and people with disabilities. This is in addition to the \$1.6 billion the Commonwealth transfers to states and territories for skills and workforce development every year, supporting key industries experiencing skills shortages and areas of emerging growth.

The budget also commits \$62 million to deliver the Skilling the Clean Energy Workforce and fund a Clean Energy Capacity Study to ensure that Australia has the workforce we need to build our strong, green economy.

In addition, funding has been provided for a National Study on Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy skills to increase participation in education, skills training, and employment opportunities.

The Government is also establishing the new agency Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) to provide the evidence and analysis needed to support all levels of government to address workforce challenges. Our investment of an additional \$12.9 million in the Budget will support JSA to inform effective strategies to tackle skill shortages and plan for the workforce of the future.

While it is imperative Australia builds the capability of its workforce, we must also look to skilled migrants to fill skills shortages where no Australian workers are available.

The Government has increased the number of permanent migration visas available in 2022–23 from 160,000 to 195,000 places, which will help parts of the Australian economy experiencing severe shortages. The Government will also be undertaking a comprehensive review of Australia’s migration system to report by the end of February 2023. There will be a focus on Australian productivity, unlocking the potential of all migrants, the need for streamlined and internationally competitive visa process, and sponsorship opportunities for emerging jobs and industries.

In addition, the Government is testing new ways of more quickly and effectively delivering skills assessments to increase migrants’ workforce participation and address Australia’s skilled workforce needs. The Government is investing \$19.7 million in 3 Skills Assessment Pilots to support around 9,500 onshore migrants with the skills Australia needs to stay and work in priority occupations.

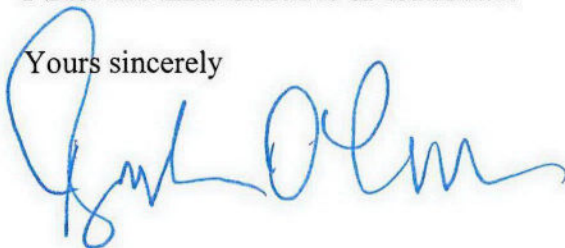
The Government is also working with stakeholders to ensure the vocational education and training (VET) system is fit for purpose—efficient, effective and easy to navigate with a focus on transferable and relevant skills that enables learners to get jobs and also supports upskilling and reskilling throughout their career. The recent Jobs and Skills Summit proved the need to reform the framework for VET qualifications and micro-credentials to ensure they are most relevant to labour market needs. As a result, the Government will work with the states and territories to place micro-credentials, including work-based learning, in a proper framework and be able to be ‘stacked’ into full VET qualifications. The Government will also work with the state and territories to develop a comprehensive blueprint with key stakeholders to support and grow a quality VET workforce.

The Summit itself was the start of a national conversation about a shared vision for building a bigger and better-trained workforce, boosting incomes and living standards and creating opportunities for more Australians to prosper. Following the success of the Jobs and Skills Summit, the Treasury has invited submissions and will engage the wider community over the next 12 months, to inform the forthcoming Employment White Paper.

The NGA’s resolutions are relevant to the Employment White Paper Terms of Reference, and I encourage you to engage with this process. Further information is available on the Treasury website at www.treasury.gov.au/employment-whitepaper/jobs-summit.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



BRENDAN O’CONNOR

10/11 / 2022



THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

MC22-010650

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

alga.ea@alga.asn.au

Dear Councillor

Linda

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2022 concerning 28 resolutions from the 2022 National General Assembly of Local Government.

On Friday 21 October 2022, I met with Australia's environment ministers and we agreed on new ambition for protecting Australia's environment, addressing the challenges of climate change and moving towards a more circular economy. Thank you for attending the meeting. As you know, Ministers agreed:

1. To work collectively to achieve a national target to protect and conserve 30 per cent of Australia's landmass and 30 per cent of Australia's marine areas by 2030.
2. To note the Commonwealth's intention to establish a national nature repair market and agreed to work together to make nature positive investments easier, focussing on a consistent way to measure and track biodiversity.
3. To work with the private sector to design out waste and pollution, keep materials in use and foster markets to achieve a circular economy by 2030.

To succeed in achieving this new ambition for our environment, climate and circular economy, all Australian Governments will need to work together and listen to each other. The spread of ideas covered by the resolutions in your letter are the kind of careful and considered input we need.

I will ensure our work on the circular economy transition and waste, on protecting biodiversity and restoring natural systems, on water and climate will take your resolutions into account.

Thank you again for bringing these matters to my attention.

Yours sincerely



TANYA PLIBERSEK

30.12.22

cc: The Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy

The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, Treasurer

The Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories

Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Emergency Management



The Hon Michelle Rowland MP

**Minister for Communications
Federal Member for Greenway**

MC22-009476

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

Dear Cr Scott

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2022 regarding communications-related resolutions from the 28th National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) held in Canberra from 19-22 June 2022. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Australian Government is committed to increasing connectivity, bridging the digital divide, improving mobile coverage and protecting communities against natural disaster.

The Government is investing over \$2.2 billion into regional telecommunications over the next five years. This includes \$656 million for the Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia (the Plan), and over \$1.6 billion to improve National Broadband Network (NBN) services across regional and remote Australia. This represent a major increase in regional communications funding and one of the most significant commitments to regional communications since the establishment of the NBN.

Funding under the Plan is available over five years and includes:

- \$400 million to boost multi-carrier mobile coverage on regional roads, improve mobile coverage in under-served regional and remote communities, and increase the resilience of communications services and public safety communications facilities;
- \$200 million for two additional rounds of the Regional Connectivity Program to invest in place-based digital connectivity infrastructure projects in regional, rural and First Nations communities;
- \$30 million for on-farm connectivity, so farmers can take advantage of connected machinery and sensor technology;
- \$20 million to conduct an independent audit of mobile coverage to better identify black spots and guide investment priorities, and

- \$6 million to boost funding for the Regional Tech Hub, which supports regional consumers to access advice and support on digital connectivity options.

More information on the measures under the Plan are available on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts website at www.infrastructure.gov.au/bcp.

The Government is also investing to improve the NBN and deliver benefits to millions of Australians. It is investing \$2.4 billion to expand full-fibre NBN access, including over \$1.1 billion in regional areas, and \$480 million to expand and upgrade fixed wireless services and boost data allowances over NBN Sky Muster services.

Thank you for opportunity to address the NGA and for taking the time to write to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Michelle Rowland MP

15 / 12/2022

cc The Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories



The Hon Bill Shorten MP

**Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Minister for Government Services**

Ref: MC22-011880

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

Linda
Dear Councillor Scott,

Thank you for your letter dated 13 October 2022, advising of the Resolutions from the 2022 National General Assembly of Local Government relevant to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Australian Local Government Association for its engagement on issues affecting Australians with disability. I note resolutions 90 and 90.1 from the National General Assembly, which seek to address concerns around the level of support provided to Australians with disability.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that no Australian with disability is left behind – from getting the NDIS working properly for those that need it, to coordinating support for all 4.4 million Australians living with disability. The Australian Government is also working to ensure that people with disability have equal opportunity to access the community and gain employment.

In the 2022-23 October Budget, estimated expenditure on supports for NDIS participants has increased by \$8.8 billion to \$166.6 billion for the 4 years from 2022-23 to 2025-26. This funding will continue to help ensure participants can access the services they need from providers in their local community.

As you are aware during the election campaign the government committed to improve disability access in the community by improving the availability of 'Changing Places' disability toilets for people with high support needs across the country. The 2022-23 October Budget provides \$32.2 million over 4 years from 2022-23 to contribute one-third of the funding required to build a facility in each of the approximately 400 LGAs currently without one.

Access to the NDIS and to NDIS supports in remote areas and other thin markets is a continuing challenge. On 18 October 2022, the Government established a review of the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS. The Review will also examine ways to build a more responsive, supportive and sustainable market and workforce. The Review findings will guide state and territory governments and the Australian Government on priority areas for improving the scheme.

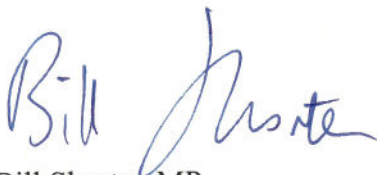
The Review website www.ndisreview.gov.au contains further information about the Review, including the Review Terms of Reference, as well as information about how to get involved in the Review – including an email subscription service.

I also encourage LGAs and community organisations to register with GrantConnect and the Community Grants Hub to receive alerts about upcoming grant opportunities. Grant Opportunities are published as they become available on GrantConnect at www.grants.gov.au and the Community Grants Hub at www.communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub provides information and fact sheets for organisations interested in applying for community grants and support for developing and submitting applications.

Thank you once again for taking the time to raise these matters and I trust this information is of assistance.

A copy of this letter has been provided to the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP.

Yours sincerely,



Bill Shorten MP

8/11/2022