



**Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie**

**Deputy Leader of The Nationals**

Minister for Agriculture

Senator for Victoria

Ref: MC19-007035

Mayor David O'Loughlin  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

15 OCT 2019

Dear Mayor 

Thank you for your letter of 14 August 2019 regarding resolutions from the National General Assembly of Local Government meeting of 16-19 June 2019.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is an important link between the local and Commonwealth governments. The “Future Focused” theme used at the recent General Assembly highlights an important issue that also aligns with the Liberal and Nationals Government’s goals including ensuring the sustainable use of national resources, improving the competitiveness of portfolio industries and enabling trade.

Regarding Resolution 100, our Government recognises the importance of research and development in meeting our goals for the horticulture sector. Our Government supports industries to invest in research and development primarily by providing grants and Commonwealth matched payments for research and development and developing policies to promote agriculture in education.

Horticulture Innovation, the industry services body for the Australian horticulture industry, invests horticulture industry levies and matching government payments in research and development for the industry. Horticulture Innovation invests the funds according to their 2019–2023 Strategy ([horticulture.com.au](http://horticulture.com.au)). Since 2014–15, Horticulture Innovation has received \$183.5 million dollars in Commonwealth matching payments for research and development, including \$51.5 million in the financial year 2017–18.

Horticulture Innovation has also received grants for seven projects and is a partner in a further seven through the Commonwealth Rural Research and Development for Profit program. This program provides funding to rural research and development corporations for collaborative projects to improve productivity and profitability at the farm gate. The program has been funded for eight years until 2021–22 and has provided over \$154 million in grants over four funding rounds.

Our Government recognises the role of agriculture education in building a skilled agriculture workforce including specialists for research and development. A 2018 Commonwealth report “Agriculture and education in Australia” identified opportunities for government and non-government organisations to support the inclusion of agriculture in the school curriculum. Our Government continues to work to the recommendations of the report.

Regarding Resolution 106, Australia has a high level of food security with domestically produced fresh produce (including meat, dairy, seafood, eggs and fresh fruit and vegetables) comprising more than 90 per cent of fresh produce sold in Australia. In a 2016 assessment of 113 nations by the Economist’s Intelligence Unit, Australia ranked the fourth most food secure country. To sustain Australia’s high level of food security our Government is investing in research and development to improve agricultural productivity, protect Australian produce from pests and diseases, expand agricultural trade and market access and address food loss and waste.

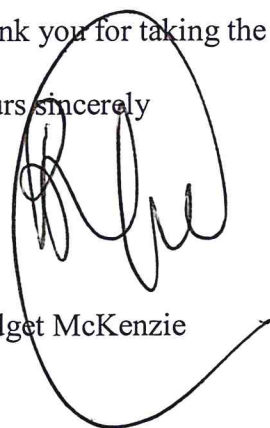
The ‘protection’ of agriculture land, also known as the “right to farm”, is an important issue to support Australia’s growing population’s food and water demands. Under the Australian Constitution, states and territories have responsibility for land and water management, including land use planning. Although not a Commonwealth responsibility, as part of the Council of Australian Governments, our Government worked with state and territory governments to develop a “Multiple Land Use Framework” (2013) in response to conflict arising over land access and land use. The framework provided guiding principles and methods and tools to provide clear direction for policy, planning and development to achieve better and consistent outcomes for affected communities and land holders.

The resolutions identified by ALGA are important goals for local, state, territory and Commonwealth governments. Our Government is committed to these goals and working with all levels of government as appropriate.

Thank you for your offer to meet with me to discuss ALGA’s resolutions. If you would like to discuss the resolutions further, please contact my diary manager on (02) 6277 7190 to arrange a suitable time.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me on this issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bridget McKenzie', enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval shape.

Bridget McKenzie