



**The Hon Michael McCormack MP**

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

Ref: MS18-002376

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

26 SEP 2018

*David*  
Dear Mayor

Thank you for your letter of 2 August 2018 regarding infrastructure, transport and regional development-related resolutions from the 2018 National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA).

Local governments have a significant role in maintaining and operating transport infrastructure and the Australian Government recognises the contribution of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and its members in bringing to the Government's attention, issues affecting local councils and the community at large.

The Government's response to resolutions you referred to me is enclosed. I have also responded to NGA's regional development-related resolutions: number 22 and number 89, which were previously sent my colleague the Hon Dr John McVeigh MP, the former Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention and I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

*Michael McCormack*  
Michael McCormack

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## RESPONSES RELATED TO INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOLUTIONS

**Resolution 11:** That the National General Assembly congratulates the ALGA Secretariat for their thorough submission of September 2017 to the National Freight and Supply Chain Priorities Discussion Paper. The Assembly particularly notes recommendations that encourage more collaboration and planning between regional groupings of Councils on regional freight plans for local connector and arterial roads. The NGA therefore requests the Secretariat provide all Councils through their state associations with:

- An assessment of the alignment of the Strategy when it is released this year with its submission, and
- Case studies and options for regional groupings of Councils (metropolitan, rural, regional and a mix thereof) to collaborate and advocate for support from both State and Federal Governments for regional freight plans for local connector and arterial roads.

The Australian Government acknowledges the ALGA's active engagement and contribution to the Inquiry into National Freight and Supply Chain Priorities. Findings from the Inquiry are being fed into the development of the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy (Strategy) and National Action Plan (NAP). The Strategy and NAP are being developed through a cross-jurisdictional working group and are scheduled for consideration by the Transport and Infrastructure Council in May 2019.

The ALGA is a valued member of this working group and on-going engagement with the ALGA, and local governments more generally, will be critical for the Strategy and NAP's development and delivery.

**Resolution 12:** That the National General Assembly:

- 1) Requests the Federal Government to expand the traffic safety measure of Tactile Line Treatments (audible warning devices, rumble strips) as a mechanism for inclusion in the current and future National Road Safety Strategies.
- 2) Advocates for additional funding allocations to be incorporated into future Federal Assistance Grants (FAG) roads component to support the infrastructure costs associated with the inclusion of Tactile Line Treatments or Audible Warning Devices in road construction to improve road safety outcomes within regional communities.

In May 2018, the Transport and Infrastructure Council endorsed a new National Road Safety Action Plan for 2018-2020, the final three years of the current National Road Safety Strategy.

The Action Plan supports increased implementation of audio-tactile line markings ('rumble strips'), along with other mass action treatments on state and local roads with the highest risk of fatality and serious injury. This work forms part of Action 2: Target infrastructure funding towards safety-focused initiatives to reduce trauma on regional roads. It is open to state and territory governments to include audio-tactile line markings as part of Infrastructure Investment Program project funding proposals.

The Australian Government provides \$2.4 billion annually under the Financial Assistance Grant program to state and territory governments to support equitable levels of local government services across Australia. The grant is untied in the hands of local governments allowing funding to be allocated to local priorities, including road safety projects.



Each year, this important funding is increased in line with Consumer Price Index and population changes.

**Resolution 13:** That the National General Assembly expresses its concern regarding the Federal Minister for Roads' intention to require Roads to Recovery funding to be directed toward safety initiatives, noting that this may not achieve the desired outcome of a reduction in the road toll, but will divert much needed resources from Council's already inadequate roads renewal budget.

The former Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon Darren Chester MP, issued the Statement of Expectations for the Roads to Recovery Program on 7 November 2017.

The Statement of Expectations encourages councils to give greater priority to road safety projects under the program but does not “require Roads to Recovery funding to be directed toward safety initiatives”. The Statement of Expectations does not change the Roads to Recovery funding conditions and it does not seek to limit the discretion councils have to choose Roads to Recovery projects according to local priorities.

**Resolution 14:** The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to ensure organisations capturing data about transport networks, openly share this data with local governments to assist with planning, delivery and operation of transport infrastructure.

The Australian Government recognises that robust data analysis is critical in investment decision-making and supports an increase in open data sources. Noting that the majority of data is held by state and territory governments, the Commonwealth is working with jurisdictions to improve public access to data.

Key initiatives include the implementation of the Australian Government’s response to the Productivity Commission Data Availability and Use Inquiry, and development of national, state and territory open data portals. Through the Australian Transport Data Action Network, the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) and state and territory transport agencies are monitoring open data initiatives and aiming to develop a common core set of National datasets and consistent data standards.

**Resolution 15:** The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to require all state and territory governments to commit to conducting regular, consistent and comprehensive household travel surveys.

The ABS have identified household travel surveys as an Essential Statistical Asset, with state and territory transport departments as the appropriate data custodians. The National Infrastructure Data Collection and Dissemination Plan also identifies Household Travel Surveys as a key data source for understanding infrastructure-use. The Australian Transport Data Action Network is working to improve consistency of Household Travel Surveys.



**Resolution 16:** That this National General Assembly strongly condemns pricing exploitation and discrimination by any airline in rural, regional and remote regions, and calls for the Commonwealth Government Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport to address concerns raised by member Councils in its Inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of affordable airfares for regional Australia, and looks forward to the findings of the inquiry into ‘The Operation, Regulation and Funding of Air Route Service Delivery to Rural, Regional and Remote Communities’ currently being progressed by the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport. A range of Government Agencies, including the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, have provided a submission to the Inquiry.

**Resolution 17:** That this National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to guarantee the preservation of landing slots at major metropolitan airports assigned to Regular Public Transport (RPT) Services from regional centres. Further, that the Australian Government provides every assistance to regional airline carriers to overcome the current pilot shortage, which is impacting on the frequency of RPT Service schedules to and from regional centres.

The Australian Government remains committed to preserving access for regional communities to major metropolitan centres.

Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport has the only regulated demand management scheme in Australia. As part of this scheme, regional access provisions ensure access to Sydney Airport for regional airlines supporting communities within NSW. This is achieved by quarantining certain slot series used to provide regional services (known as ‘permanent regional service series’). To support continued access to Sydney Airport, price notifications for aeronautical services and facilities provided by Sydney Airport to regional air services are made public under Part VIIA of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*.

A Treasurer’s declaration for price increases to aeronautical services and facilities for regional services (including capping any price increases) also supports regional access. Any changes to the scheme would require legislative amendment and bipartisan support. The Government has publicly stated there are no plans to amend regional aircraft access arrangements to Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport.

The current growth in global demand for airline services, including by Australian airlines and other airlines in the Asia-Pacific region, is creating strong demand for suitably qualified and experienced pilots, as well as other aviation professionals. The Government welcomes the contribution already being made by the Australian aviation industry in support of training and retention of aviation professionals in Australia.

On 27 July 2018, the Report of the Expert Panel on Aviation Skills and Training was released. The Report was prepared by industry stakeholders, with secretariat support from the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities. The Report has made a number of recommendations that will be considered by industry and government stakeholders.



**Resolution 22:** That the National General Assembly notes the continued uncertainty surrounding the status of second and third tier Cities, where those Cities can be classified as either as a 'regional' or 'metropolitan'. The NGA calls on the ALGA to write to the federal Government seeking clarification about regional and metropolitan boundaries in Australia, recognising the importance of second and third tier cities to the Australian Economy.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of all regional cities as they play a vital role in providing services and boosting local economies. Larger regional cities in particular act as service and employment hubs for their regional neighbours. The Government is focusing on growing our regional economies, creating new and better paying jobs and giving families the opportunity to keep living and working in our regional communities. This year's Regional Australia Budget statement details our significant new and ongoing investments for regional Australia across health, education and training, agriculture and water resources – including over 100 new initiatives.

Moreover, the Government is considering options on how to best adopt the “City Deal” approach in regional centres, to complement our current investment in regional Australia. Similar to the existing City Deals, Regional Deals will bring together all levels of government to capitalise on economic opportunities for a region to make the most of its strengths to foster economic development. The Government will release more information about its approach to Regional Deals in the near future.

**Resolution 60:** That the National General Assembly advocate to the Federal Government, through the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and also the Minister for Regional Development, for appropriate funding for the National Transport Network and that a review of significant transport corridors in all States and Territories be undertaken.

The Australian Government has committed over \$75 billion over the next 10 years towards transport infrastructure. This investment covers a range of priorities, including delivering nation-shaping transport projects such as the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail to ensure the long-term productivity and sustainability of our transport network, and providing ongoing funding to local and state governments to maintain national, state and local road networks.

The Government has also provided long-term surety for funding to support maintenance of the road networks. Through the 2016-17 Budget, the Government committed an ongoing annual Commonwealth funding allocation of \$400 million for the Roads to Recovery Program and \$350 million per annum for maintenance of the National Land Transport Network (NLTN).

As announced by the former Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon Darren Chester MP in late 2017, a review of the NLTN is currently underway with the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities working with the state and territory agencies on potential updates or amendments to the NLTN. All proposals are being assessed against the requirements of the *National Land Transport Act 2014*, prior to consideration by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development later this year.



**Resolution 60.1:** That the National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to officially recognise the Princes Highway as a Highway of National Importance as a major freight and tourist route.

The National Land Transport Network (NLTN) supports the construction and maintenance of nationally significant economic links, especially major freight routes and roads connecting capital cities and major economic centres. The NLTN includes the Princes Freeway and Highway from Melbourne to Sale and Melbourne to Colac. The addition of further sections of the Princes Highway on the NLTN will be considered as part of the broader network review.

In recognition of the important role of the Princes Highway in supporting communities and growing our economy, the Government is developing a Princes Highway Corridor Strategy in partnership with the New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian governments. The Strategy will identify and prioritise transport infrastructure investment over the short, medium and long term across the entire length of the Princes Highway.

Once complete, the strategy will inform the investment decisions of both federal and state governments. This may include funding for the Princes Highway under the \$3.5 billion Roads of Strategic Importance initiative, once governance arrangements are settled later this year and if determined a priority by Government.

**Resolution 61:** That this National General Assembly calls on the Commonwealth Government to support State and Territory freight and port plans, including Draft NSW Freight and Port Plan, to provide a broad framework proposed to deliver improved network efficiencies, capacity and sustainability for the network.

The Australian Government is developing a National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy with jurisdictions, including the ALGA, through the Transport and Infrastructure Council.

The Strategy will provide a national umbrella to support the delivery of individual jurisdictional freight plans, such as the NSW Freight and Port Plan. Working closely with industry, it will also help to position the freight system to work across state and territory borders to enable the efficient delivery of goods wherever they are required across Australia.

**Resolution 62:** That the National General Assembly ask the Federal Government to fund a feasibility study and a full and comprehensive ecological assessment undertaken to determine which of the streams along the Great Dividing Range are suitable for the generation of hydro-electricity/pump hydro and if feasible, allocate funds in the next budget for this work.

This Resolution relates to the Portfolio responsibilities of the Hon Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Energy. However, I note hydropower is the most advanced and mature renewable energy technology and continues to be the largest contributor to renewable energy in Australia. As more renewable energy—mainly in the form of solar and wind power—enters Australia's electricity grid, the need for energy storage solutions is growing.

Pumped hydro energy storage (PHES) is a mature and cost-effective storage solution with the capacity to store power for long periods, even across seasons. One of the key roles of PHES is to manage the variability of renewable energy, allowing supply to match demand. PHES can provide grid stabilisation services (e.g. inertia, voltage and frequency control) and help to address peak demand as the percentage of renewable generation increases.



This flexibility makes PHES a valuable player in the National Electricity Market (NEM).

Development of PHES aligns with recommendations from the *Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market*. Responding to a recommendation from this Review, the Australian Energy Market Operator released an Integrated System Plan in June 2018 to facilitate the efficient development and connection of renewable energy zones.

The Australian Government through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) continues to support a range of large-scale energy storage projects. It is recommended proponents contact ARENA for advice on a project's suitability and help determine the fit of the proposal with ARENA's programs and funding priorities at [proposals@arena.gov.au](mailto:proposals@arena.gov.au) or 1800 804 847.

Australian councils can invest in a range of clean energy technologies to help reduce energy costs and lower emissions, drawing on tailored CEFC finance options. CEFC investment decisions are made on a commercial basis, in line with the requirements set out in its Investment Mandate. Should a proponent wish to engage with the CEFC, please contact: [localgovernment@cefc.com.au](mailto:localgovernment@cefc.com.au)

**Resolution 72:** That National General Assembly notes previous NGA resolutions calling on the Federal Government to fund key Public Transport Projects. The NGA notes two key recent developments that add impetus to these NGA resolutions, namely:

- The release by Infrastructure Australia and other state-based infrastructure bodies' priorities, including public transport projects;
- Submissions to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities' Inquiry into the Australian Government's role in the development of cities.

NGA therefore write to the Prime Minister, Minister for Transport, Opposition Leader and relevant Ministers as well as the House of Representatives Standing Committee to reconfirm NGA resolutions that the Federal Government fund key Public Transport Projects, and highlight the increasingly unsustainable growth of Australia's cities and the lack of connections of rural regions and towns which could both be improved through significant Federal Government funding of public transport projects.

The Australian Government recognises that as our cities and regional centres grow, it becomes increasingly important to help people move around our cities, and between our cities and their surrounding regional areas, quickly and efficiently.

That is why the Government is investing nearly \$19.2 billion towards rail infrastructure from 2018-19, with almost \$9.4 billion allocated towards passenger rail projects. The \$10 billion National Rail Program has been established to invest in public transport projects to help make our cities more liveable and efficient as they grow, and support our efforts to decentralise our economy and grow regional Australia.



In the 2018-19 Budget, the Government announced a number of significant investments in public transport projects including:

- \$5 billion for the long-awaited Melbourne Airport Rail Link;
- \$1.1 billion for further components of METRONET in Western Australia; and
- \$300 million for Brisbane Metro.

The Government has also made a commitment to investigate faster rail connections between our cities and surrounding regional areas. Following a detailed competitive assessment process, the Government announced on 9 March 2018 that it would provide matching funding of up to \$20 million to three successful proponents for the development of faster rail business cases as follows:

- the NSW Government's proposal for Sydney to Newcastle;
- Consolidated Land and Rail Australia's (CLARA) proposal for Melbourne to Greater Shepparton; and
- the North Coast Connect Consortium's proposal for Brisbane and the regions of Moreton Bay and the Sunshine Coast.

The Government will work closely with successful proponents to progress the business cases, which are expected to take between 12 to 18 months to complete. Once the business case for each proposal is completed, the Government will review the outcomes in detail and explore opportunities to take forward the projects in partnership with state governments and the private sector.

**Resolution 75:** The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government, to ensure adequate and equitable funding for local government, to deliver and maintain transport infrastructure.

The Australian Government supports the ongoing maintenance and upgrade of Australia's road network in recognition that a safe, sustainable national transport system enhances Australia's productivity and economic growth, facilitates inter-jurisdictional travel and trade and underpins the social and economic lives of communities Australia-wide.

The Government is providing over \$2.4 billion in untied funding under the Financial Assistance Grant program in 2018-19 to state and territory governments to support equitable levels of local government services across Australia. This includes the early payment of over \$1.2 billion of the 2018-19 funding the Government paid to all states and territories in June 2018, which was immediately distributed to councils. The program helps councils deliver infrastructure, health, recreation, environmental employment and road projects.

In 2016-17 Budget, the Government committed to continuing annual allocations for the Roads to Recovery Program (\$400 million), the Black Spot Program (\$60 million), the Bridges Renewal Program (\$60 million) and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (\$40 million) indefinitely. These sub-programs provide funding directly to local governments to help fund local roads.

The Government also provides \$350 million annually for maintenance on the National Land Transport Network.



**Resolution 76:** That the National General Assembly calls upon the Federal and State Governments to ensure adequate road infrastructure is provided to growth areas, particularly on our metropolitan fringes, to support Local Councils in the delivery of the duplication of growth area roads to ensure safe and timely passage of vehicles.

The Australian Government's infrastructure investment and cities agenda is an important policy tool to achieve our national economic policy objectives. Cities are changing, with population growth occurring in fringe areas, shifts in employment locations, and a demand for smaller blocks of land, more apartments and townhouses, as well as an increase in density and infills. This has significant implications for our infrastructure.

The Government is responding to these changes so that cities remain liveable and productive:

- strong focus on public transport and particularly rail;
- support for better integration of urban planning and transport planning; and
- the use of City Deals as a policy tool to drive these outcomes.

The Australian Government has committed \$75 billion towards transport infrastructure over the next decade to better connect people to jobs and communities, and improve business access to domestic and global markets. This includes \$1.75 billion for NorthEast Link in Melbourne to complete the orbital metropolitan road connection support commuters from growth areas in Melbourne's north.

The Government is also working cooperatively with the New South Wales government on the planning and design of Western Sydney Rail, with \$50 million committed to develop a business case to plan for connections between future growth areas and employment opportunities in the region. This project, together with the construction of the Western Sydney Airport, is re-shaping Sydney.

**Resolution 77:** That the National General Assembly calls for the Commonwealth and State Governments to take action to establish detailed rail and road upgrade plans for high growth areas of Australia. This will provide the infrastructure needed to support plans for a significant increase in population in these areas over the next 20 years.

**Resolution 77.1:** That the National General Assembly calls for the Commonwealth and State Governments to take action to establish and fund the provision of transport infrastructure to meet Australia's growing need for efficient and sustainable movement of freight. This is to include detailed rail and road upgrade plans to meet the growing need for infrastructure required to support increased freight delivery over the next 20 years.

Through the 2018-19 Budget, the Australian Government committed to taking a longer-term view of infrastructure investment needs in response to population growth and increasing freight demand. The 10-year Pipeline of nationally significant projects is a forward-looking list of the Government's transport priorities to give industry and communities certainty around investments over the medium term.

The Government considered a range of evidence when developing the Pipeline, including Infrastructure Australia's Infrastructure Priority List (which lists priorities over the near (0-5) to future (more than 15 years) term), state transport plans and network modelling that forecasts population and freight growth.



The Government also requires that Infrastructure Australia undertake its Australian Infrastructure Audits to identify future infrastructure challenges and to develop the Australian Infrastructure Plan. Infrastructure Australia takes a strategic approach to assessing infrastructure needs by examining the drivers of future infrastructure demand, particularly population and economic growth. The next Audit is due by 30 June 2019.

To support planning and business case development for the next phase of Government investment to address future challenges, the Government also established the \$250 million Major Project Business Case Fund. This will ensure that the Government can continue to actively work with jurisdictions to develop the infrastructure required to meet Australia's growing needs.

The Commonwealth, state and territory transport Ministers working as the Transport and Infrastructure Council have developed a National Rail Vision and Work Program that aims to enhance Australia's productivity, competitiveness and liveability through collaboration between governments and industry on rail reform to:

- integrate rail with other transport modes to enhance the transport network's functionality;
- improve rail's efficiency, capacity and environmental performance;
- access sustainable funding and delivery models;
- capitalise on new technologies; and
- improve rail safety.

The Government's current freight network funding priorities include over \$430 million committed to improve the movement of freight in Sydney and Melbourne through completing duplication of the freight line to Port Botany, capacity enhancement on the Southern Sydney Freight line and for the development of a port rail container shuttle network in Melbourne.

**Resolution 78:** That this National General Assembly calls on the Commonwealth Government to support the key objectives of Cycling and Walking Australia and New Zealand in the national interest to implement strategies and actions that will rapidly improve the conditions for, and the uptake of walking and cycling on transport and recreation networks across Australia and New Zealand.

The Australian Government's view is that states and territories, and local government, are largely responsible for, and best placed to set rules and standards and provide the infrastructure to support active transport.

States and territories have formed Cycling and Walking Australia and New Zealand (CWANZ) as a fresh approach to promoting investment in cycling and walking across all levels of government, improving national consistency and harmonisation and applying innovation and learning. The Australian Government is an observer on CWANZ.

The Government's support for active transport is primarily through the inclusion of new cycling and pedestrian infrastructure as part of a project funded under the Land Transport Infrastructure Projects National Partnership Agreements. Details of particular projects are outlined in the document 'Strengthening Australia's cities and regions', which outlines the Government's priorities for infrastructure investment through the 10 year pipeline.



In addition, the City Deal framework, as highlighted in the Smart Cities Plan, has scope to encourage active transport if identified as a priority in discussions with other levels of government and the community.

**Resolution 79:** The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to explore alternative funding models to offset the lost income from the take-up of high-efficiency/non-combustible powered vehicles (electric, hydrogen).

The Australian Government is working with other levels of government to develop a more sustainable approach to the provision of roads.

It is sensible for government to consider whether current governance, tax and institutional arrangements for the funding and provision of roads will be equitable and sustainable in the long term. This is increasingly important as new and emerging technologies, such as automated and electric vehicles, are rapidly changing the way we travel, move goods and plan our transport networks and cities.

Under existing arrangements, the amount people pay in registration fees and other road related taxes and charges does not reflect how often they drive on roads or the road services they receive. Further, drivers of highly fuel-efficient vehicles pay less in fuel excise to drive the same journeys as those with older, less fuel-efficient vehicles.

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments have agreed to investigate road pricing for light vehicles. Before making any decisions on light vehicle reform, governments would need certainty that the benefits from a broader use of road pricing would exceed the costs. There is currently a focus on heavy vehicle road pricing as the first stage of this work program. This work is proceeding in partnership with state and territory governments, supported by complementary trials involving heavy vehicle operators and industry.

No decision has been taken by governments to implement road pricing for light vehicles. Full market reform would likely take 10 to 15 years.

**Resolution 80:** That the National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to commit to co-design with state and local governments an urban reform agenda framed around the 9 findings and the 15 recommendations of Infrastructure Australia's Future Cities paper.

The Australian Government noted the Infrastructure Australia report and its key finding that unplanned growth will deliver the worst outcomes for Australia's cities.

Cities are a priority for the Government and the Smart Cities Plan released in April 2016 sets out the Government's urban policy agenda. The Plan sets out a vision for productive and liveable cities that encourage innovation, support growth and create jobs.

City Deals are the key mechanism for implementing the Plan. They are long-term agreements involving all three levels of government that seek to align planning, investment and governance to accelerate local growth and job creation, stimulate urban renewal and drive economic reform. Since the Plan was announced, the Government has signed City Deals for Townsville, Launceston and Western Sydney. City Deals for Darwin, Hobart, Geelong and Perth are in development.



**Resolution 80.1:** That the National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to increase funding for enabling infrastructure in growth areas, and recognise the need for infrastructure to be established in a timely manner to services for new communities to prevent the corresponding issues that occur as a result from lack of timely access. That this issue be placed on the COAG agenda given the need for all of Federal, State and local governments to work together.

With Australia's population growth, intense urbanisation, and dispersed regional communities: there will always be a need for the Australian Government to invest in infrastructure that increases the capacity of the network to address congestion, and ensures freight routes operate efficiently.

As such, the Government is continuing its significant investment in transport infrastructure—committing over \$75 billion to transport projects over the next 10 years across urban and regional Australia under its rolling investment program. The Government will continue to assess priority investments annually, including investments to support urban growth.

The Government recognises that as our cities and regional centres grow, it becomes increasingly important to help people move around our cities, and between our cities and their surrounding regional areas, quickly and efficiently. For example, the Government has made a commitment to investigate faster rail connections between our cities and surrounding regional areas.

**Resolution 89:** That the National General Assembly call for a review of Regional Development Organisations to ensure geographical alignment with Local Government Joint Association of Regional Organisation boundaries.

A review of this nature would result in the need for the Regional Development Australia (RDA) program's funding models to be reviewed and may potentially lead to changes to committee membership. Boundary changes were considered as part of the Australian Government's response to the 2016 independent review of the RDA program and it was decided not to make any changes at this time.

With regard to the rollout of Joint Organisation of Councils (JOC) in NSW, not all the local government areas are electing to join a JOC, so that would need to be considered when considering potentially realigning RDA regions to match JOC regions.

In the absence of an overarching review of boundaries, if there were specific concerns, these can be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the current process for boundary changes available on [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).