27th National General Assembly
20—23 June 2021 CANBERRA

WORKING TOGETHER FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

BUSINESS PAPERS
For further information on the Business Papers, or other policy matters, please contact:
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600
Ph: (02) 6122 9400
Fax: (02) 6122 9401
Email: alga@alga.asn.au
Website: www.alga.asn.au

Published by:
Australian Local Government Association
ABN 31 008 613 876
8 Geils Court DEAKIN ACT 2600
Motion 22 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC
  Motion 22.1 Blacktown City Council, NSW
Motion 23 Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD
Motion 24 Mitcham Council, SA
Motion 25 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC
  Motion 25.1 Brimbank City Council, VIC
Motion 26 Yarra City Council, VIC
  Motion 26.1 Orange City Council, NSW
  Motion 26.2 Snowy Monaro Council, NSW
Motion 27 Paroo Shire Council, QLD
Motion 28 Randwick City Council, NSW
Motion 29 Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD
  Motion 29.1 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD
  Motion 29.2 Tamworth City Council, NSW
Motion 30 Mildura Rural City Council, VIC
Motion 31 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD
Motion 32 Leeton Shire Council, NSW
Motion 33 Melbourne City Council, VIC
Motion 34 Town of Gawler Council, SA
Motion 35 South Burnett Regional Council, QLD
Motion 36 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW
  Motion 36.1 Willoughby City Council, NSW
  Motion 36.2 Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW
Motion 37 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW
Motion 38 Randwick City Council, NSW
Motion 39 Darebin City Council, VIC
Motion 40 East Arnhem Regional Council, NT
Motion 41 Darwin City Council, NT
Motion 42 Newcastle City Council, NSW
Motion 43 Inner West Council, NSW
Motion 44 Isaac Regional Council, QLD
Motion 45 Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW
Motion 46 Glen Innes Severn Council, NSW
Motion 47 Blacktown City Council, NSW
Motion 48 Penrith City Council, NSW
  Motion 48.1 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC
Motion 49 Broken Hill City Council, NSW 69
Motion 50 Leeton Shire Council, NSW 70
  Motion 50.1 Leeton Shire Council, NSW 71
Motion 51 Tweed Shire Council, NSW 72
Motion 52 Yarra City Council, VIC 72
  Motion 52.1 Newcastle City Council, NSW 73
  Motion 52.2 Inner West Council, NSW 74
  Motion 52.3 Broken Hill City Council, NSW and Coonamble Shire, NSW 74
  Motion 52.4 City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW 75
Motion 53 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC 76
Motion 54 Brimbank City Council, VIC 76
  Motion 54.1 Liverpool City Council, NSW 77
Motion 55 Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD 77
Motion 56 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD 78
  Motion 56.1 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD 79
Motion 57 Maribyrnong City Council, VIC 80
Motion 58 City of Boroondara, VIC 80
  Motion 58.1 Broken Hill City Council, NSW 81
Motion 59 Liverpool City Council, NSW 82
Motion 60 Brimbank City Council, VIC 83
Motion 61 Darebin City Council, VIC, Fremantle City Council, WA, Mount Isa City Council, QLD, Randwick City Council, NSW 84
  Motion 61.1 Yarra City Council, VIC 84
  Motion 61.2 Byron Shire Council, NSW 85
  Motion 61.3 Newcastle City Council, NSW 86
Motion 62 Orange City Council, NSW 87
Motion 63 Isaac Regional Council, QLD 87
Motion 64 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW 89
Motion 65 Orange City Council, NSW 89
Motion 66 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW 90
Motion 67 Broken Hill City Council, NSW 90
Motion 68 Tenterfield Shire Council, NSW 91
Motion 69 Newcastle City Council, NSW 92
Motion 70 Litchfield Council, NT 93
Motion 71 Leeton Shire Council, NSW 96
Motion 72 Mildura Rural City Council, VIC 96
Motion 73 Mitchell Shire Council, VIC 96
Motion 74 Wakefield Regional Council, SA 97
Motion 75 Liverpool City Council, NSW 98
Motion 76 Penrith City Council, NSW 99
Motion 77 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD 100
Motion 78 Broken Hill City Council, NSW 100
Motion 79 Mitchell Shire Council, VIC 102
Motion 80 Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW 102
Motion 81 Shellharbour Council, NSW 103
  Motion 81.1 Lake Macquarie City, NSW 103
Motion 82 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD 104
Motion 83 South Burnett Regional Council, QLD 105
Motion 84 Parkes Shire Council, NSW 105
Motion 85 Shoalhaven City Council, NSW 106
Motion 86 Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD 107
Motion 87 Tamworth Regional Council, NSW 107
Motion 88 Hobart City Council, TAS 108
Motion 89 Cowra Shire Council, NSW 108
Motion 90 Tamworth Regional Council, NSW 109
Motion 91 Leeton Shire Council, NSW 110
Motion 92 Parkes Shire Council, NSW 111
Motion 93 Moreland City Council, VIC 112
Motion 94 Darebin City Council, VIC 113
Motion 95 Byron Shire Council, NSW 114
Motion 96 Liverpool City Council, NSW 114
Motion 97 Northern Midlands Council, TAS 115
Motion 98 Salisbury City Council, SA 116
Motion 99 Darebin City Council, VIC 116
Motion 100 Wattle Range Council, SA 117
Motion 101 City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW 118
Motion 102 Leeton Shire Council, NSW 119
National General Assembly – 2021

How COVID-19 will change the Debate on Motions at this year’s Assembly

- The delivery of the 2021 National General Assembly will be a ‘Hybrid’ model to enable delegates to attend in person or via an approved digital technology.
- The Assembly will be conducted under COVID-19 requirements as approved by ACT Health.
- The President will take any necessary actions to ensure that the debate on motions occurs in accordance with the approved COVID-19 Plan.
- Debate on Motions will be conducted in accordance with the rules printed in the 2021 Business paper.
- To accommodate delegates attending the Assembly virtually, voting delegates may move second a motion in the Business paper providing that:
  - the voting delegate advises the President in advance of their intention to move the or second the motion, and
  - of their intention to speak to the motion.
- Virtual voting delegates who wish to speak will be required to dial into the Assembly by appropriate technology at least 15 minutes before the motion is due to be debated to enable the efficient management of the debate on motions.
- Restrictions on delegate movement and microphone use required by the approved COVID Plan will make it impossible in practical terms to consider amendments from the floor and so amendments to motions intended to be moved in the debate must be provided in advance and in writing to the ALGA Secretariat by close of business on Wednesday 16 June 2021.
- This year the business paper is divided into two volumes. The first volume contains the rules and business to be conducted at the 27th Session of the National General Assembly. This volume will be circulated to delegates. The second volume includes a report on resolutions of the 2019 NGA and motions submitted to the 2020 NGA (which was cancelled due to COVID-19) and Ministerial responses to those resolutions and motions. Volume 2 will be made available on the ALGA website and not circulated.
National General Assembly Debating Rules – 2021 (COVID-19 Amended)

1 - Interpretation

1.1 “Assembly” means: The National General Assembly of Local Government as constituted by the delegates present in person or attending virtually by the approved digital technology.
1.2 “Member” means: any local government council which is a financial member of and recognised by a state or territory local government association within the Commonwealth of Australia.
1.3 “Delegate” means: any person who has paid the designated administration fee.
1.4 “Voting Delegate” means: any person nominated as the delegate to speak on the behalf of a Member at the Assembly - each Member to be entitled to appoint one voting delegate only for each debate session.
1.5 “President” means: The President for the time being of the Australian Local Government Association who will act as President of the Assembly, or in his or her absence the Vice Presidents of the Association or a person appointed by the President to preside over the Assembly.
1.6 “Debate on Motions” means: Plenary or concurrent debating sessions of the Assembly which are held in accordance with these rules.
1.7 “Meeting” means: Plenary or concurrent debating sessions, forums and symposia of the Assembly which are held in accordance with these rules.

2 - President to Preside

2.1 The President shall preside over the Assembly.
2.2 A delegate wishing to speak shall direct comments to the President.
2.3 A voting delegate moving or seconding a motion or amendment or delegate taking part in a discussion thereon shall address the President.

3 - Resolutions

3.1 Motions will become Resolutions when passed by a majority of voting delegates at the Assembly.
3.2 Resolutions shall be permanently recorded and forwarded to the Australian Local Government Association for consideration and action as deemed to be appropriate.
3.3 Resolutions will be recorded and will be considered by the ALGA Board and used by the President for any purpose in the interest of local government.

4 - Priority of Speakers

If two or more delegates wish to speak at the same time the President shall decide who is entitled to priority.

5 - President to be Heard

Whenever the President signifies a desire to speak during the Assembly, any delegate speaking or offering to speak is to be silent so that the President may be heard without interruption.

6 - President may call to order

The President shall preserve order and may call any delegate to order when necessary.
7 - Ruling by President

The President shall decide all questions of order or practice and his or her decision shall be final and be accepted by the Assembly without argument or comment unless in any particular case the Assembly resolved that a different ruling shall be substituted for the ruling given by the President. Discussion shall be permitted on any motion of dissent from the President’s ruling.

8 - Point of Order

A delegate who is addressing the President shall not be interrupted except on a point of order, in which event the delegate shall wait until the delegate raising the point of order has been heard and the point of order has been determined after which the delegate so interrupted may, if permitted, continue.

9 - Limitation of Debate

9.1 Except for a mover of a motion who may speak for two (2) minutes, a delegate shall not speak upon any motion or amendment or in reply for a period longer than one-and-a-half (1.5) minutes without the consent of the President.

9.2 No delegate shall speak more than once on any motion except for the mover who may exercise a right to speak in closing the debate.

9.3 Any delegate of the Assembly who has not already spoken on the motion or amendment under discussion may formally propose: 'That the question be now put'.

9.4 The President shall not accept the motion 'That the question be now put' until at least one delegate has spoken in favour and one delegate has spoken against the motion or amendment.

9.5 If formally seconded, the proposal shall be put without further discussion and, if carried by a simple majority of the voting delegates of the Assembly present, the mover of the question shall have the Right of Reply, after which the motion must be put to the vote.

9.6 The mover of a motion shall be entitled to a Right of Reply. At the conclusion of the reply, the debate shall be deemed to have closed and the President shall put the question to the vote.

9.7 No delegate of the Assembly, other than the mover of a motion when exercising a Right of Reply, may speak more than once to each motion, amendment, or substantive motion unless with the permission of the Assembly and/or the President. A delegate may be invited to speak by the President to explain a matter of a personal nature, or to explain him/herself in regard to some material part of his/her speech which has been misquoted or misunderstood but shall not introduce any new matter or interrupt any delegate in possession of the floor.

10 - Resolutions

Except as otherwise provided in these Rules:

10.1 only voting delegates may move or second a motion or an amendment. (Refer 14: Moving an Amendment)

10.2 motions concerning the affairs of the Assembly shall be passed by a simple majority of those voting delegates present.

10.3 motions on which there is an equal division of votes will be declared lost.

11 - Moving an amendment

11.1 After a motion has been moved and seconded, any voting delegate of the Assembly representing a member may move an amendment. If such amendment is seconded, it shall become the subject of discussion.
11.2 Limitations
Where the Assembly is conducted under a Covid Safety Plan, or other provisions or approved
Plans required by the ACT Government that restrict voting delegate movement and access to
microphones to be heard, members are required to submit amendments to motions in writing
and in advance to the ALGA Secretariat by Close of Business Wednesday prior to the
commencement of the Assembly.

11.3 An amendment must be relevant to the motion, and so framed that it forms a sensible
alternative proposal. It must not be a direct negation of the original motion.

11.4 No Right of Reply to Amendment
The mover of an amendment shall not have the Right of Reply to the debate on such
amendment.

11.5 Substantive Motion
Should the amendment be carried, it then becomes a substantive motion upon which further
amendments may be moved, always providing that there shall not be, at one time, more than
one amendment before the Assembly.

11.6 Foreshadowed Amendment
Any delegate during his/her speech on an amendment shall have the right to foreshadow a
further amendment but such foreshadowed amendment shall not formally come before the
Assembly until the motion or amendment before the President has been dealt with. The
President may request the substance of the foreshadowed amendment.

12 - Debate
Where there is no debate on a motion that has been moved and seconded the President may put
the motion to the Assembly.

13 - Permissible motions during debate
When a motion is under debate, no further motion shall be moved except the following:
• that the motion be amended
• that the speaker no longer be heard
• that the question now be put
• that the Debate on Motions proceed with the next business.

14 - Method of taking votes
14.1 The President shall, in taking a vote on any motion or amendment, put the question first in the
affirmative, and then in the negative. Voting will be by use of electronic keypads or by the
approved technology. In the event of a technical failure of the electronic keypads manual
voting cards will be issued to the holders of electronic keypads and a vote will be determined
on a show of voting cards.

14.2 At the conclusion of a vote the President must declare the question resolved in the affirmative
or the negative.

15 - Division
In the event of the use of voting cards, upon a vote being taken, a voting delegate may call for a
division.
16 - Withdrawal of a motion

A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the mover, with the consent of the Assembly, which shall be determined without debate. No delegate shall speak on a motion after it has been withdrawn.

17 - Quorum

17.1 Determination of a Quorum - A quorum for debate on motion sessions at the 2021 National General Assembly will be set at half the number of voting delegates plus one. The quorum (number) will be declared by the President at the commencement of the debate on motions. This quorum will be determined by the ALGA Secretariat based on the number of councils registered by mid night Saturday immediately prior to the commencement of the NGA. It shall be equal to the number of eligible votes divided by 2 plus 1. For example, if there are X councils registered by mid night Saturday night immediately prior to the commencement of the NGA, the quorum will be set at x/2 plus one. A majority of the quorum will be required to pass a resolution.

17.2 A Quorum Present at Commencement - At the commencement of each debate on motions session the President will determine if the quorum is present. At the commencement of each debating session, the President will invite all voting delegates to record a ‘test’ vote. A total number of ‘test’ votes will be displayed by the system and the President will determine whether a quorum is present for that session. If the number of ‘test’ votes is equal to or more than x/2 plus one, a quorum will be declared, and voting will proceed.

17.3 Voting to Proceed - If a quorum is not present, a debate on motions will proceed at the discretion of the President. Outcomes of debate on motions when a quorum is not present will be considered as ‘indicative only of the NGA’ rather than a resolution of the NGA when the ALGA Board what determine the action to be taken on Resolutions.

18 - President’s right to vote

For the purposes of these Rules the President, subject to having been nominated as a voting delegate by a Member, shall have one deliberative vote only.

19 - Rescission of Resolution

The Assembly, by two thirds majority, may rescind or alter an adopted resolution.

20 - Special urgent business

20.1 At any time during Debate on Motions a voting delegate may, with the approval of a two-thirds majority of voting delegates present, introduce a motion relating to special urgent business which calls for an expression of opinion from the Assembly. In presenting an item of special urgent business a voting delegate shall have sufficient copies of the motion in writing for distribution to all voting delegates present at the Debate on Motions and give prior notice to the President of such intention.

20.2 Where the Assembly is conducted under a Covid Safety Plan, or other provisions or approved Plans required by the ACT Government no Special urgent business will be conducted unless provided to the ALGA Secretariat in writing and in advance by Close of Business Wednesday prior to the commencement of the Assembly.
21 - Suspension or amendment of rules

21.1 In case of urgent necessity any of the Rules may be suspended on a motion duly moved and seconded, but that motion shall not be declared carried unless a two-thirds majority of the delegates of the Assembly voting on the motion have voted in favour.

21.2 Any voting delegate moving the suspension of a Rule shall state the object of the motion, but discussion shall not otherwise take place thereon.

22 - Motions

Strategic Motions

For the purpose of efficient and effective debate, motions that have been submitted for debate by councils that are similar in subject matter have been compiled into composite motions. The strategic motions have either been drafted by ALGA or are based on a motion submitted by a council which best summarises the subject matter.

Debate will focus on the strategic motions numbered X. Motions numbered X.1, X.2 and so forth (that is, 1.1, 1.2 etc.) are associated motions and if the motion is carried the associated motions are considered to be redundant.

23 - Resolutions

Motions that are carried at the National General Assembly become resolutions and will be referred to the ALGA Board to inform future policy initiatives and for consideration in the development of future work programs.

24 - Business Paper Notes

ALGA comments have been attached to some motions to indicate that the substantive matter dealt with in the motion is consistent with ALGA current policy. Motions that have been grouped in Section B, at the back of the business paper, are consistent with ALGA policy. It is intended that these motions will be voted upon en bloc to save time to focus debate on motions that re-affirm core ALGA policy or deal with new matters.
Voting Procedures

Electronic keypads will be issued from a separate desk at the registration stand at the assembly at the following times:

- Sunday 20 June  8.00am – 7.00pm.
- Monday 21 June  8.00am – 5.00pm.

For Debate on motions in debating sessions councils must select one voting delegate, as only one keypad will be issued per council.

To facilitate issuing of keypads, councils should decide in advance who their voting delegate will be and appoint a representative to collect the keypad on behalf of the council.

Electronic keypads that are lost will incur a $100 charge.

Please note that only councils that are financial members of their relevant State or Territory Association are entitled to nominate voting delegates.

Virtual delegates will be forwarded a separate package of information which will include voting instructions prior to the event.
2021
MOTIONS
1

City of Newcastle, NSW

That the National General Assembly:

1. Notes with disappointment that Local Government remains unrepresented on the National Cabinet and requests that First Ministers review the decision to exclude Local Government from the national decision-making table;

2. Recognise the importance of having local government representation on National Cabinet and the value of partnerships with councils in achieving the objectives of the National Cabinet and the national reform agenda; and

3. Includes a representative from the Australian Local Government Association on the National Cabinet, to ensure local government’s interests are strongly represented at the national level.

Objective

- Local Government has been excluded from the National Cabinet, despite strong representation of Federal and State Governments through First Ministers (the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers).

- Australians expect their three levels of government to be working together, and to see evidence of that. Including Local Government in National Cabinet would demonstrate a strong unity of purpose and a combined commitment to promote and implement National Cabinet decisions across the broadest implementation platform available to government.

- Local Governments are willing and necessary partners in developing and implementing reform. Councils facilitate, establish, and grow local businesses and economies. Economic development has always been at the core of every successful council. Councils support economic growth through regional development policies and initiatives, strategic and land use planning, targeted investment attraction, prioritisation of local procurement, and focusing their annual investment on infrastructure that serves the community and business alike. Many councils also provide business networking opportunities, business training, mentoring, and incubator facilities and employment hubs. It is local government that is best placed to drive the locally led recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Key Arguments

On 13 March 2020, as the Coronavirus pandemic took hold around the world, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) met in Sydney to discuss a range of issues of national importance. At that meeting First Ministers (the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers) agreed to establish a National Cabinet to meet at least weekly to address the country’s response to the coronavirus.

There was no Local Government representation on National Cabinet when it was established on the basis that its focus was on health.

On 29 May 2020, First Ministers, through the Prime Minister, announced the continuation of National Cabinet, which they considered to be a much more effective body than COAG for taking decisions in the national interest.

1.1

Blue Mountains City Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Commonwealth Government to provide local government representation on National Cabinet through the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA); and acknowledges the value of partnerships with
Councils in achieving the objectives of the National Cabinet and the national reform agenda

Objective
For 28 years ALGA has represented local government at Australia’s peak national decision-making body, the Council of Australian Government (COAG).

With Australian Government’s decision in 2020 to abolish COAG and replace it with the National Cabinet, local government no longer has a seat at the table. Local government has a key role to play in national policy development, planning and decision-making. Local Government is closest to the community and is directly involved in planning and responses to critical national agendas from economic growth and development, addressing climate change, environmental protection and cultural heritage, regional development, strategic and land use planning, infrastructure development to support the health and wellbeing of local communities across Australia.

Recently local government has demonstrated its critical role in the emergency responses and recovery through the bushfires, floods and COVID-19 pandemic. Getting policy development, planning and implementation right on the ground is Local Government’s area of strength. Councils facilitate, establish, and grow local businesses and economies; have a key role in responding to the impacts of climate change through improved land management; strengthen environmental protection and support sustainable economic growth and development. Local Government must have a seat on the National Cabinet.

Key Arguments
When the Coronavirus pandemic took global hold, COAG discussed a range of issues of national importance. The Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers agreed to establish a National Cabinet to meet weekly to address the country’s response to the coronavirus. The focus was Australians’ health and wellbeing. National Cabinet has since broadened its agenda beyond managing coronavirus impacts across Australia. With these changes Local Government should now be included in the National Cabinet.

In May 2020, First Ministers, through the Prime Minister, announced the continuation of National Cabinet, which they considered to be a much more effective body than COAG for taking decisions in the national interest. Local Government was not given a seat at the National Cabinet table. However, ALGA was given a seat on the National Federation Reform Council (NFRC). The NFRC meets annually to focus on priority national federation issues such as Closing the Gap and Women’s Safety. In addition to ALGA, the NFRC is comprised of the National Cabinet and the Council of Federal Financial Relations – Federal and State/Territory Treasurers.

Australians expect the decisions of government affecting them to reflect their grass roots views and to be implemented at the local level as well as the state and national level. Getting it right on the ground is Local Government’s area of strength.

Councils facilitate, establish, and grow local businesses and economies. Councils support local economies through regional development policies and initiatives, strategic and land use planning, targeted investment attraction, prioritisation of local procurement, and focusing their annual investment on infrastructure that serves the community and business. Councils also provide business networking opportunities, business training, mentoring, and incubator facilities and employment hubs. In times of emergencies, Councils play a pivotal role in supporting communities and coordinating community-based responses and recovery efforts.
1.2
City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW

That this National General Assembly calls on the state/territory and Australian Governments to highlight the critical necessity for Local Government representation on the National Cabinet, and request that First Ministers review the decision to exclude Local Government.

Objective:
Local Government in Australia has enjoyed many years at the table of the Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG), rightly representing the interests of the tier of government closest to the people we all serve. In 1992, when COAG was convened, Local Government was included because all parties recognised its direct impact on people’s daily lives in terms of the provision of local services and infrastructure.

This changed in May 2020, when the Prime Minister announced the launch of the new National Federation Reform Council (NFRC) intended to replace COAG, with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) serving on the NFRC although excluded from the National Cabinet. The continued exclusion of ALGA, the peak body representing councils across Australia, reflects a Fragmentary response by Government to the broader call for representation on the expanded National Cabinet.

Local governments are willing and necessary partners in developing and implementing reform. The continued challenge facing National Cabinet in supporting the nation through the economic recovery of the pandemic is unlike any which has faced Australian governments in recent times. What is required is a concerted, coordinated and complementary effort by all tiers of government to rebuild consumer confidence, support business and bolster employment.

Key Arguments
Local government is best placed to drive locally-led recovery. Councils support economic growth through regional development policies and initiatives, strategic and land use planning, targeted investment attraction, prioritisation of local procurement, and focusing their annual investment on infrastructure that serves the community and business alike. Many councils also provide business networking opportunities, business training, mentoring, incubator facilities and employment hubs.

Decisions about how our Federation works and how it can be improved or reformed require all three tiers of government working together to align their policies and programs. Australians expect that government decisions that affect them appropriately reflect their views and be actioned accordingly.

Including Local Government in the National Cabinet would demonstrate a strong unity of purpose and a combined commitment to promote and implement National Cabinet decisions across the broadest implementation platform available to government. It is for these reasons we are advocating for the NSW and Australian Governments to bring Local Government back into the fold and take up its rightful place at the table of the National Cabinet.

Local Government was not given a seat at the National Cabinet table and remains without adequate representation at the National level.

1.3
Lake Macquarie City, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to include Local Government (ALGA) in the National Cabinet.

Objective
The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has seen a new federal structure evolve to deal with national issues that require action across all levels of government.
The National Cabinet has, in effect, subsumed the role and function of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

**Key Arguments**

Given that Local Government is a member of COAG, it follows that Local Government should also be included in the National Cabinet.

Local Government’s exclusion from the National Cabinet denies the level of government closest to the people a seat at the table at what has become the major intergovernmental instrument which unites the governments of Australia in dealing with issues of national importance.

1.4

**Leeton Shire Council, NSW**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government for permanent local government representation on the National Cabinet.

**Objective**

To promote a strong unity of purpose and a combined commitment by all levels of government to working together for our communities.

**Key Arguments**

- The National Cabinet was established on 13 March 2020 to coordinate the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. It was decision-making forum composed of the Prime Minister and the premiers and chief ministers of the states and territories. There was no local government representation on National Cabinet when it was established on the basis that its focus was on health.
- On 29 May 2020, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that the National Cabinet would replace the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and would meet monthly once the coronavirus crisis has abated.
- Councils have been represented by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) at every COAG meeting since COAG’s inception in 1992. Local government representation was included because all parties recognised that Australia has three levels of government and that local government has the most impact on people’s daily lives in terms of the provision of local services and infrastructure.
- Decisions about how our Federation works and how it can be improved or reformed require all three levels of government to work together to align their policies and programs.
- National Cabinet is looking towards pro-growth policies to lift investment and grow jobs. Local government is best placed to drive locally led recovery. Councils support economic growth through regional development policies and initiatives, strategic and land use planning, targeted investment attraction, prioritisation of local procurement, and focusing their annual investment on infrastructure that serves the community and the economy.

1.5

**Shellharbour Council, NSW**

This National General Assembly requests the Australian Local Government Association to continue to lobby the Federal Government for Local Government to be reinstated to National Cabinet.

**Objective**
It is important that Local Government be reinstated to National Cabinet as it affects all local government councils.

**Key Arguments**
The National Cabinet has replaced the Council of Australian Government (COAG), of which the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) was a foundation member.

The reason for their inclusion in (COAG) was to bring a local perspective to decisions being made nationally. Local government is the level of government closest to the community. Councils offer an inimitable local insight other levels of government simply do not have.

It is important that local government is at the National Cabinet table to provide advice and support when decisions are being made that affect local communities. For example, most of the decisions made in relation to COVID-19 had to be implemented/or monitored by local government and it is always better to know what the impacts are going to be on local government.

2

South Burnett Regional Council, QLD and Shellharbour Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to restore funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

**OBJECTIVE**
Financial Assistance Grants are a form of Federal Government funding provided to the States for the purposes of Local Government.

The total funding amount of the grant on an annual basis was equivalent to 1% of Commonwealth Taxation Revenue in 1996. That 1% figure has significantly reduced since that time to a level approximately half of that amount.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**
The Local Government sector’s revenue raising capacity is constrained to approximately 3.5% of Australia’s total taxation revenue compared to over 80% by the Federal Government. Financial Assistance Grant funding contributes to 7% of the Local Government sector’s total revenue. This key source of funding for local government has declined from a funding level of 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue in 1996 to a level closer to 0.5% currently.

Contributing to that decline in the level of funding in recent years has been the decision by the Federal Government to place an indexation freeze on the grants for a three-year period from 2014/15 to 2016/17.

At the same time, the demand from the community for local government services and infrastructure provision continues to grow.

Cost shifting from the states to the local government sector has also increased over time placing further financial pressure on local government Councils.
2.1
Tenterfield Shire Council, NSW

The National General Assembly again calls on the Australian Government to increase funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants to a level of at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue by the 2022/23 Financial Year.

OBJECTIVE
This relates to the objective of Council Resilience and specifically the question of:

"Apart from Financial Assistance Grants, how can the Australian Government assist councils to become more financially sustainable and able to better meet the needs of their communities?"

Even more specifically, we strongly believe that the question should not include the statement “Apart from Financial Assistance Grants”

KEY ARGUMENTS
Information received from Councillor Mulholland re Financial Assistance Grants that was provided to the Country Mayors Association of NSW on Friday 5th March states that:

“Advice received from Minister Coulton’s office is that the 1% position our peak bodies want won’t happen i.e. that ALGA’s call for FAGS to be tied to 1% of Commonwealth Tax Revenue isn’t going to happen.”

This is unacceptable.

Especially given that another quote from Minister Coulton included in that same report said “Local Government have a critical responsibility to deliver vital services and ensure quality of life for their communities”

Councillor Mulholland’s report went on to say that “with country councils heavily relying on these grants, without them, many of us will simply go into administration. It’s not sustainable…. FAGS as a % of rates revenue for Sydney Council is 2%, for Gunnedah Shire Council it is 25% and for Kyogle Council it is 63% of rates revenue…. further, ALGA at the 2019 conference passed a resolution to remove the minimum per capita payment……the original reason for the legislation ...was to provide funding for disadvantaged councils who lack the capacity to deliver services they are supposed to deliver….it is our councils that are most disadvantaged.”

Tenterfield Shire Council agrees wholeheartedly with these comments and for Tenterfield the percentage in FAGS is in fact greater than Councils rates income at 110% – it is crucial for Tenterfield for the delivery of services and infrastructure.

In addition, Grants are a double-edged sword. While they provide new infrastructure for Councils, they also lead to additional operational costs as inevitably depreciation costs increase as Councils don’t replace like for like - generally there is an upgrade that results in higher depreciation costs. The additional asset lifecycle costs are not provided for in fixed capital grants. Council’s need untied operating income to meet these higher costs.
There have been two opposing motions related to the distribution methodology for the Financial Assistance Grants submitted for debate at the 2021 National General Assembly. One seeks to change the methodology in favour of regional and rural local government areas whilst the other seeks no change in the methodology until the quantum of the Financial Assistance Grants is increased to 1% of Commonwealth Tax Revenue. These two motions will be debated concurrently. The two sides of the debate will be as follows - for a change in methodology versus against a change in methodology. The mover of the motion for the change will speak first.

3
Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the federal government to undertake a review of the current financial distribution arrangement of the Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) with the purpose of developing a formula which will redistribute the funds and increase the amount currently apportioned to regional and rural local government areas across the nation for a fairer share.

OBJECTIVE
To see an increase of the funding distribution to rural and regional areas disadvantaged by large LGAs and a small rate base to a minimum of 1%.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Currently the dissemination of FAG's is disproportionate to rural and regional areas compared to their metropolitan counterparts where a smaller rate base significantly reduces options of revenue sources. Rural and Regional councils are heavily dependent on FAGs for the provision of infrastructure and services more than other grants or funding streams as they are not locked into individual projects but rather determined by councils for their individual needs.

3
Forbes Shire Council, NSW

That this National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to not vary the financial distribution of Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) until the FAGs level is increased to 1% of Commonwealth tax revenue.

OBJECTIVE
Financial Assistance Grants enable Local Government to address the unique needs of their communities through access to untied funds. While Local Government’s funding as a share of Commonwealth Taxation Revenue (CTR) is declining, demand for council services and infrastructure is increasing.

The impact of cost-shifting on Local Government where available funding does not keep pace with delivery costs further erodes councils’ ability to deliver the outcomes expected by their communities.

Local Government is united in its appeal to the Australian Government to return the funding allocation to 1% CTR, but divided in terms of the financial distribution between metropolitan, regional and rural councils. This wedge issue is preventing any traction being attained in regard to returning to the 1% CTR.
It is recognised that returning funding allocation to 1% CTR is a significant increase, and therefore a phased return is supported and encouraged. Further, it is imperative that the return to 1% is achieved prior to varying the financial distribution of FAGs.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

The federal budget allocation for FAGs is currently sitting at around 0.55% of Commonwealth Tax Revenue (CTR), which is a significant decrease from the 1% CTR recorded in 1996. This relative reduction in FAGs grants over time seriously impacts the financial viability of councils who are highly reliant on grant funding for their financial survival.

When this matter was considered by the Board of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) in 2020, ALGA noted “its long held position was that the quantum of the grants should be restored to a level equal to at least 1% of Federal Income Taxation Revenue, the level which applied in 1996”. ALGA further noted that “in recognition of the significant funding increase that would be required, ALGA was advocating for a phased increase of the Financial Assistance Grant as follows: an additional $830 million per annum over two years on top of the base quantum starting from the 2020-21 financial year, followed by an additional $200m per annum from 2022 – 23 until 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue is achieved”.

While Local Government as a whole is in support of returning the budget allocation to 1% CTR, division exists regarding the distribution between metropolitan, regional and rural councils. This division is impeding the more important issue of increasing the overall level of FAGs, therefore this motion seeks the support of ALGA and Local Government to put the distribution matters aside until resolution has been reached in relation to returning the budget allocation for FAGs to 1% CTR.

---

4
Maroondah City Council, VIC

That this National General Assembly calls upon the Federal Government to provide a one-off increase in the amount of Financial Assistance Grants made to Local Government for the 2021/22 year in recognition of the substantial costs incurred and revenue losses for all Councils as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial impacts of the resultant Federal, State and Territory Government restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of the disease.

**OBJECTIVE**

This motion would be relevant to the work of Local Government nationally as outlined in the summary of key arguments.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

Councils across Australia have had to significantly increase expenditure to deal with the local impacts of Covid-19, increasing spending on basic essential services to keep their communities safe through the pandemic and meeting community expectations during this extremely challenging time. Significant expenditure has also been incurred due to the provision of additional sanitation and cleaning as required to support and sustain a range of essential services during this period under State and Territory Governments State of Emergency legislation.

Council revenues have been impacted due to the closure of revenue generating services as well as hardship considerations and a large reduction in the amounts collected for fees, fines and services.

A one-off increase to the Financial Assistance Grants would enable Local Governments to direct the extra revenue towards services and programs that have been curtailed due to Covid-19 imposed budget cuts and savings measures.
Maroondah strongly supports the case for the Federal Government to provide one-off funding to local governments.

5
Tenterfield Shire Council, NSW

The National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to provide grant funding to Regional and Rural Councils in advance and not in arrears so as to avoid impacting unfavourably on such Councils’ cash flow.

OBJECTIVE
This relates to the objective of Council Resilience and specifically the question of:

"Apart from Financial Assistance Grants, how can the Australian Government assist councils to become more financially sustainable and able to better meet the needs of their communities?"

KEY ARGUMENTS
Receiving grant funding in arrears of payments made can put a significant financial strain on a Council’s cashflow and may even mean that a Council needs to take-out short-term bridging finance to meet payments, thereby increasing costs to ratepayers.

Payment in advance of expending cash on grant funded projects is a far better option for Councils, particularly Regional and Rural Councils that just don’t have the revenue streams or cash flows to be able to fund up-front payments for large capital projects.

6
Frankston City Council, VIC

The National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to:

- Increase in real terms its financial assistance to local government to ensure that Councils can continue to provide the necessary financial support to local businesses and the community for its economic recovery in the face of the continuing impacts of COVID-19; and
- Reverse its decision to exclude employees of subsidiary organisations to local government from any future JobKeeper payment support that may be necessary for businesses significantly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19).

OBJECTIVE
Local Government has been on the front line in providing financial assistance to local businesses and the broader community since the onset of the pandemic, which cannot continue without the urgently needed and vital support from the Australian Government.

The Australian Government’s decision to specifically exclude local government employees and employees of subsidiary organisations from the JobKeeper payment, placed these employees at a disadvantage compared with like employees in other organisations. As a result, they could not be redeployed on Council work.

At the time of March 2020, PARC, being a subsidiary of Frankston City Council, had 302 members and immediately stood down 259 casual staff and 25 permanent staff. The remaining 18 permanent members had hours significant reduced, with some only receiving 3 hours per fortnight. It was extremely disappointing and resulted in majority of its employees being stood down locally for several months from PARC. There needs to be equity across the board to ensure employees receive the same benefits.
The resulting decision to stand down staff was not taken lightly. Receiving the JobKeeper payment would have meant that these local jobs would have the security they needed to have got through this difficult and uncertain time. Especially for those whose personal circumstances may mean they are ineligible for the JobSeeker payment.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

It cannot be stressed enough that this financial burden and economic impacts of COVID-19 created significant hardship for staff, local businesses and the wider community.

Local Government has been on the front line in providing financial assistance to local businesses and the broader community since the onset of the pandemic, which cannot continue without the urgently needed and vital support from the Australian Government.

Staff employed by subsidiaries of Council, such as PARC, lost their independence, they could not pay rent or buy food so had to seek community handouts.

Many staff left the industry to seek employment elsewhere. This has created an ongoing issue for the PARC facility to reopen and meet the daily operational needs as qualified staff have sought work at other facilities that can provide the Jobseeker support.

---

7

**Brimbank Shire Council, VIC**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to partner with respective State and Territory Governments, as well as Local Government Areas (LGAs), to establish and administer dedicated Jobs and Skills Partnerships for LGAs, to help create local job pathways, align and improve employment, skill, and learning outcomes for local communities across Australia in response to COVID-19. Local Jobs and Skills Partnership would be responsible for the review, coordination and monitoring of Federal, State and local government efforts and resources, including social services, libraries and neighbourhood houses, right through to schools, TAFE, and higher education; as to ensure meaningful pathways are identified and created to employment on local infrastructure projects, as well as with relevant industries that require labour and will provide future job opportunities across respective regions.

**OBJECTIVE**

The priorities and themes contained in this motion are consistent with ALGA's national objective of "Stronger Community Resilience". This objective seeks to foster more resilient communities that can respond to, withstand and recover from adverse situations, including through extended recovery funding to address long term economic and social impacts from adverse events. This motion calls on the Federal Government to lead and develop a meaningful national approach in responding to the shocks the COVID-19 Pandemic has had on employment, through dedicated local Jobs and Skills Partnerships with LGAs, which recognise and respond to local employment issues as part of immediate and ongoing COVID-19 recovery efforts. The significant take-up up the "JobKeeper" and "JobSeeker" Schemes demonstrated the impact the COVID-19 Pandemic had on national economic activity. The ongoing and evolving nature of the Pandemic, including through ever changing LGA and border closures, mean the ongoing effects on remote working, full time, casual, and part time jobs, as well as skill demands, will continue to evolve. National leadership to help support and coordinate localised responses through a proposed Jobs and Skills Partnership can provide a pathway in this regard.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

The COVID-19 Pandemic and associated lockdowns, border and travel restrictions, have created and continues to create varying and evolving economic, employment and skill issues throughout LGAs in
respective ways across Australia. Whilst the Federal Government’s fixed term JobKeeper and JobSeeker programs have helped support employed and unemployed people impacted by COVID-19 for an allocated duration of time, a more comprehensive strategy will be required to help get people back into work and local jobs across local communities.

The Federal Government’s 2020-21 Budget allocated funding to establish a Local Jobs Program, which would support tailored approaches to reskilling, upskilling and employment in 25 regions across Australia in varying ways, including through local employment facilitators, local Jobs and Skills Taskforces, local Jobs Plans and through a Local Recovery Fund. Whilst a welcome first step, this approach does contain limitations and inefficiencies; including the fact that in some regions not all LGAs have been invited to be represented on the Taskforce, and that the approach does not provide full visibility, coordination, integration and alignment with various and similar work being undertaken by respective state, territory, regional and local authorities.

A significant opportunity exists for the Federal Government to elevate the work of the existing Local Jobs Program, to become a genuine, meaningful and effective Jobs and Skills Partnership, that should be provided for across all LGAs, and expanded to include partnerships with all LGAs. Such Partnerships could more effectively consider and respond to employment and skill issues across each LGAs. For example, LGAs whose communities may have higher portions of manufacturing workers or higher portions of service skill requirements, may require different responses and support to those communities who require greater agriculture, mining and rural type skills. Creating Partnerships that bring together all government and non-government stakeholders across municipalities, will help support COVID-19 job and skill recovery efforts.

7.1
Wyndham City Council, VIC

That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to partner with State and Territory Governments and Local Governments, to roll out nationally a locally coordinated place-based employment services program for disadvantaged job seekers under the New Employment Services Model (NESM), including in particular support for refugees and humanitarian entrants who require Enhanced Services delivered through employment services providers under the NESM.

These national enhanced employment services are proposed to build on the recent Regional Employment Trials, administered by the Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment, which have shown success in using a place-based approach to draw on local stakeholder expertise in developing employment projects, coordinated by local government.

OBJECTIVE

The priorities and themes contained in this motion are consistent with ALGA’s national objective of ‘Stronger Community Resilience’ as it strengthens the capacity of communities to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. Economic crises such as the impacts of COVID-19 consistently hit disadvantaged communities hardest and providing enhanced employment services to those who need it most strengthens our capacity to respond to these crises.

The motion also focuses on the theme of “Collaboration and Partnerships”. As the Centre for Policy Development has noted, locally connected, place-based approaches to delivering critical services have been widely commended and are achieving good results. These approaches use local networks to lift social and economic participation, with local government in a coordination role.
In Victoria, Wyndham City Council and its partners have been successfully running the Wyndham Employment Trial to boost economic participation for young people and humanitarian migrants. Other trials have also been successful in NSW, Queensland and Tasmania.

What is now required is the resources to scale up these initiatives and roll them out nationally to ensure that the disadvantages faced by humanitarian migrants seeking employment are not further entrenched by the impacts of economic crises.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

In 2019 a Federal Government review into integration, employment and settlement outcomes for refugees and humanitarian entrants chaired by Prof Peter Shergold AC recommended in their report ‘Investing in Australia, Investing in Refugees’ that “To improve the social and economic participation of refugees, the Commonwealth Government should invest in labour market integration strategies by trialling a range of specialist place-based employment services.”

The review noted that one of the key factors to settlement success is employment. Where a refugee is able to participate in work, the benefits are profound, not only for individuals but also for Australia’s social capital, workforce skills, reduced welfare dependence, increased tax revenues and social cohesion among communities.

Often overlooked, refugees bring attributes keenly sought in Australian workplaces including resourcefulness and innovation.

Trials such as the Wyndham Employment Trial have been highlighted in the Australian Government response to the review as successful examples of using a place-based approach to draw on local stakeholder expertise to develop employment related projects. It was noted that through this project Wyndham City Council has adopted a coordination role and is using established networks with business and industry to develop employer-led solutions to address barriers for refugees and open up employment opportunities with local businesses. As a result of the Wyndham Employment Trial eighteen employers are recruiting, and ninety-four humanitarian migrants have been placed in employment.

In February 2021 The Hon Alan Tudge MP noted in a speech as acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs that a key challenge for the current government is the unacceptably low employment rate of our humanitarian intake. He cited that the unemployment rate of refugees after one year of arriving is 77 per cent and remains at 22 per cent after 10 years. “We have to do better”, said Mr Tudge.

7.2

**Brimbank City Council, VIC**

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to expand the National Cabinet process to integrate and partner with local government, through the development, investment and support of dedicated COVID-19 Health, Wellbeing and Economic Response Packages for Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Australia.

**OBJECTIVE**

Providing COVID-19 Response Packages for local communities, can more effectively consider and respond to the varying socio-economic consequences of the Pandemic across individual regions, and the associated health impacts, border restrictions, community lockdowns, business and industry impacts that have been experienced by individual municipalities. Such Packages could build on the Federal Government’s City Deal Process, and provide investment towards health and wellbeing initiatives, greater support directly for local councils, and shovel ready projects.
The themes and priorities contained within this Notice of Motion (NoM) are consistent with the ALGA’s National Objectives of supporting both "Financial Sustainability" and "Stronger Community Resilience". The "Financial Sustainability" objective seeks to increase local government’s share of tax revenue to meet increasing demands on local infrastructure and services, which have been undoubtedly compounded as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The "Stronger Community Resilience" objective seeks to facilitate an outcome whereby Australian communities have the capacity to respond, withstand and recover from adverse situations. Key elements of this National objective that relate to this Notice of Motion (NoM) include advocacy for a $200 million disaster mitigation fund, and advocacy for funding to allow every local government to plan and develop a resilience and emergency management plan, and recovery funding to address long term economic and social impacts from adverse situations. In March 2020 the Federal Government declared COVID-19 as a national bio-security emergency and pandemic, creating national wide health, wellbeing and economic ramifications, the result of which continue to require a national response. Developing proportionate, dedicated and targeted COVID-19 Response Packages for each LGA across Australia will help provide communities and councils with the more support.

KEY ARGUMENTS

Compared to the rest of the world, Australia’s response to the COVID-19 Pandemic has largely helped to contain and mitigate the spread of the virus. A key driver in Australia having been able to maintain an effective handle on COVID-19 outbreaks, has been the meaningful role which local governments communities have played to support national, state and territory decisions. The ability of local governments to act in nimble, agile and responsive ways to evolving community and organisational demands as a result of COVID-19, have helped ensure local communities continued to receive the information, resources, support and assistance they needed and will continue to require.

In doing so however, the Pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for LGAs through municipal emergency management; community health, wellbeing and safety; local economic, employment, business and industry activity; demand on local infrastructure, services and resources; as well as on Council revenues, facilities, and open space. Whilst LGAs have increasingly absorbed the expectations and required responses from the Federal and State Governments, as well as from local communities, since the outbreak of the Pandemic- the funding, investment and support from the Federal Government to assist LGAs in doing so has not been as forthcoming nor proportionate.

That is why opportunity now exists for the Federal Government, in partnership with respective State, Territory Governments, to build on the momentum of the National Cabinet process to fully integrate and support local governments. The key pillar in this regard is for the Federal Government to support and invest in dedicated COVID-19 Response and Recovery Packages that are tailored to LGAs across Australia, which can effectively respond to the local on the ground emerging and evolving health, wellbeing and socio-economic needs of communities. Just like many regions on previous occasions have been assisted by dedicated response packages, including those impacted by bushfires, floods, drought, significant industry closures and other shocks; COVID-19 packages should now be funded.

7.3
Nillumbik Shire Council, VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work closely with state and local government to develop appropriate funding mechanisms to enable local governments to establish community hubs for the co-location of key services such as education, youth services, counselling and community health, in order to deliver
comprehensive, integrated support to local communities, as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVE
The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a severe toll on local communities, leaving no aspect of people’s daily lives untouched. Councils, in their capacity as deliverers of services directly to the community, have seen the effects first-hand.

The experiences of the past 12-14 months have impacted health – both physical and mental - employment, education as well as family and social relationships. While the advent of the COVID-19 vaccine is a critical primary health intervention, the psychological, social and economic effects will require comprehensive, long-term solutions, involving all levels of government.

Councils have a central role, through their intimate local knowledge and their extensive local networks. While the issues with which communities are dealing in the aftermath of the pandemic are similar, on a broad scale, a comprehensive solution, although national in scope, must take into account local needs and characteristics.

Councils, as the providers of key services, deliverers of social and other infrastructure and the level of government with most direct community interaction, are uniquely placed to ensure that this occurs.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Prior to the onset of the pandemic, Nillumbik Shire Council had identified the establishment of a community hub in one of its Major Activity Centres as one of the priority projects on which to advocate for Federal Government funding.

The aim of this purpose-built hub would be to serve to increase community connection and ease of access to a range of Council services. Among its features would include:

Adult learning and registered training facilities;
- a dedicated youth space;
- a library;
- a theatre and performance function space; and
- a community lounge and meeting space.

In 2020, in order to ensure a coordinated response, Council formed its own internal Pandemic Recovery Taskforce, drawing on officers from a range of operational areas across the organisation.

At the same time, Council conducted an extensive survey Together in Nillumbik to better understand how the pandemic was affecting its community.

The information gleaned in this survey has been invaluable in helping to inform the work of the taskforce. Its results revealed four clear themes or areas in which people had been most affected:
- inclusion;
- healthy environments;
- healthy behaviours; and
- employment and education.

These results and the overarching themes will guide Council in its current response and in future pandemic planning.

Notions of collaboration, increased community connectedness and resilience, with Council playing a key role in providing the underpinning support recur throughout.
While again, they align broadly with information gleaned on a state and national level, they also contain elements unique to Nillumbik’s demographic profile.

8
City of Melbourne, VIC

That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a funding program directed through local government to support those in sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In seeking support, the NGA advises that the new funding program should:

1. Be separate to, and provide funding above and beyond that offered by, Financial Assistance Grants.
2. Require local government to directly employ local people in the arts, entertainment and events industries, noting these are heavily impacted industries that have been least supported by the JobKeeper program due to a high instance of casual and contract labour, and which have been overlooked by significant stimulus funding from the Commonwealth Government.
3. Recognise the ability of local government to expend stimulus funding efficiently and fairly.
4. Place a focus on the importance of creative practitioners in developing solutions in local communities as part of economic recovery and community development.

OBJECTIVE

The creative economy around Australia has been one of the hardest hit sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Australian creative and cultural industries sector contributes over $111 billion to the national economy and employs more than 600,000 people, more than mining and aviation combined.

Thriving creative sectors are crucial to the viability of local communities and attention at a national level is needed to provide a boost to what was an under-funded sector during pre-COVID times.

KEY ARGUMENTS

The economic, social and cultural benefits of a thriving creative sector are important for all Australian communities, both large and small.

The sector coming to a halt and impact on its Australian workforce has been severe. The June 2020 PAC Australia Update on the impact of COVID-19 on performing arts centres, showed dismissals occurred for 74.5 per cent of the casual workforce. Furthermore, the study showed 55.3 per cent of full-time/part-time staff were working at significantly reduced hours.

The Australian Festivals Association and the Australian Music Industry Network initiative ‘I Lost My Gig Australia’ reported in April 2020; the total lost income of 12,600 respondents was $340 million, with the loss of almost 300,000 work opportunities.

The arts sector has long suffered from a lack of funding support from the Australian Government. The pandemic and subsequent shortcoming in the response by the Australian Government has delivered a significant blow to a sector already in need of greater attention and support.

Action is now required to address the shortcoming in response to date. A funding boost is needed on top of existing grant programs to further stimulate the sector and this should be channelled through local government, which has a proven track record, to reach and employ local artists.
The recently announced $125 million increase to the Restart Investment to Invest and Sustain fund in Victoria will not be a locally administered, or even Australia Council administered program, and therefore unable to locally employ those in the arts and entertainment sectors most in need of employment.

ALGA’s 2021-2022 Pre-Budget Submission recommended Australian Government funding for Local Government Arts and Culture for COVID-19 economic and creative recovery. The proposal sought $120m per annum over four years which was estimated to create 1,198 jobs and a contribution of $153m to the annual GDP.

9
Tenterfield Shire Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to either cease the practice of expecting Council co-contributions when applying for Federal Government Grants or allow Council’s in-kind contributions to be eligible as the co-contribution from Councils.

OBJECTIVE
This relates to the objective of Council Resilience and specifically the question of:

"Apart from Financial Assistance Grants, how can the Australian Government assist councils to become more financially sustainable and able to better meet the needs of their communities?"

KEY ARGUMENTS
A Council’s Cash co-contributions towards grant funded projects often take funding away from other Council priority areas.

Councils think they don’t want to miss out on the opportunity for some grant funding and inevitably divert funding from other priorities to enable a Council to avail itself of the new grant funding on offer or, if resources aren’t diverted, a loan needs to be taken out.

The preference would be for the Australian Government to fully fund a particular project e.g. a bridge without the requirement for a co-contribution, but, failing that option, Councils should be able to use in kind contributions as the Council contribution towards their funding of a project to receive grant funding.

Currently it is often the case that a Council’s in-kind contributions are not eligible for consideration as going towards a 50/50 funding arrangement (for example) in terms of meeting grant eligibility guidelines.

9.1
Tenterfield Shire Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to change the eligibility conditions for new grant funding opportunities which currently preclude projects already contained within operational plans. Projects in operational plans are often funded from loans adding to the financial burden on ratepayers.

OBJECTIVE
This relates to the objective of Council Resilience and specifically the question of:

"Apart from Financial Assistance Grants, how can the Australian Government assist councils to become more financially sustainable and able to better meet the needs of their communities?"
KEY ARGUMENTS
Loans add to the financial burden of ratepayers over many years and often grant guidelines state that projects already included in a Council's operational plan are excluded from being eligible for grant funding. The financial burden on Councils and therefore ratepayers could be reduced if restrictions such as this were to be removed from grant funding guidelines.

10
Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to introduce funding opportunities for regional airports to offset reductions in income due to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure regional communities are not further disadvantaged.

OBJECTIVE
Whilst the Federal Government has introduced a financial assistance package for airlines, no package has been made available for airports. Local communities are left to foot the bill for continuing to ensure regional airports meet their State and Federal regulatory burdens from which no respite was given.

These communities have played their part in ensuring Australia continues to receive the benefit of the regions, including resource mining, agriculture, local tourism, and to provide quick and affordable access to emergency, medical, police and defence forces.

As very little of the Federal airline assistance scheme made it to recompense regional communities for the losses they were forced to take, it is appropriate that these communities are not left to carry the ongoing effects of the pandemic response. This includes reduced passenger numbers, not enough income to fund depreciation (resulting in a future inability to self-fund maintenance leading to long term grant dependence), high passenger, landing and security fees in an attempt to cover basic costs etc.

Multiplied across Australia the above will conspire against the resilience of the regions, their vibrancy and financial stability.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Government funded multinational commercial corporations (airlines), paid for by borrowings and tax revenue, meaning it was funded by the communities that was fully left to carry the cost of federal and state directives. Communities were left with all the costs of operating airports, little income and will have to pay for the assistance of airlines and Job Keeper but received no help.

Airports dutifully delivered upon their community service obligations during the pandemic, regardless of losses, facilitating resources and agricultural industry continuation as an example (earning Australia foreign reserves, keeping people in jobs). No airport industry wide rescue package was made available. In addition, local government employees were excluded from the Job Keeper program.

In the end, rate payers are funders of last resort.

The Federal Government COVID relief (SARA) penalised communities that invested in their airports. Prudent Councils attempting to establish a financially self-sufficient airport that set monies aside to fund maintenance and asset renewal as per the requirements of the LG Act and prudent financial management were informed that they must use reserves and depreciation to cover unmet costs. By forcing council to use reserves earmarked for asset maintenance (to comply with regulations) Councils will become dependent on grants in future to the fullest extent.
The National General Assembly calls on Australian, State and Territory Governments to:

- harmonise legislation, regulation, policies and practices to mitigate the financial and social impacts of anomalies on border communities across the nation, and
- adopt a national approach to management of the COVID-19 pandemic to eliminate the closure of State and Territory borders.

**OBJECTIVE**

The first part of this motion seeks to improve harmonisation of legislation, regulation, policies and practices across the country to reduce red tape, eliminate community confusion, enhance compliance and maximise productivity and efficiency. The second and related part of this motion seeks to ensure a consistent national approach to the management of COVID-19 and to mitigate the negative impacts that arise when this does not occur.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

The lack of alignment between Australian, State and Territory Governments continues to negatively impact on the whole of the nation, particularly border communities. Progress is being made through mutual recognition arrangements between the various levels of government; however, greater emphasis and priority needs to be placed on harmonisation to address the many and varied impacts, including on the lives of individuals, provision of education, health and social services and business and industry, all of which comes at an economic and social cost.

This past year has seen numerous border closures activated by State and Territory Governments to control COVID-19. The impact of these closures has spread far and wide, and well beyond the border communities directly affected for sustained periods. The National Cabinet was established to enable governments to work together to manage COVID-19 and address issues and find solutions to its health and economic impacts. The continued willingness of governments to close borders, despite limited numbers of COVID-19 cases, has a significant negative impact on the wellbeing of the community and our national economy. Recent approaches by some States have demonstrated that a local/regional approach to the management of hot spots is effective in restricting the spread of the virus without the flow on effects of snap border closures. When restrictions were at their peak, the NSW Government closure of its southern border resulted in an estimated loss in Gross Regional Product of $39M per month to the Albury Wodonga Regional economy and impacted more than 14,515 people crossing the border at Albury Wodonga to travel to work each day. More than 20,000 vehicles per day regularly moved through the three checkpoints in Albury Wodonga.

That 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.

That this relief include:

a. Initiatives targeting the tourism and creative industries
b. an evaluation of and response to the youth and gender impacts of COVID-19
c. initiatives that will boost jobs and long-term community resilience to climate
d. restoration of funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

**OBJECTIVE**
The objective of this resolution is to:

- Draw national attention to the struggles of rural and regional communities in relation to a unique set of circumstances following COVID-19. This includes the most devastating bushfires on record; prolonged and (for some) continuing drought and/or flooding; tourism challenges; and ongoing challenges in maintaining local country roads
- Propose a relief program that recognises and addresses the unique set of circumstances people in rural and regional areas are struggling with
- Recognise and address the fact that the impacts of COVID-19 have been worse for women
- Bring to focus the opportunity to apply a relief package to build long term community resilience to the effects of climate change

Redress the significant economic damage caused by the three-year freeze on the indexation of FAGs to 2017-18 which hampered the ability of rural and regional Councils to deliver services and maintain local roads and infrastructure (a larger impact on regionals due to the way the grants are distributed).

**KEY ARGUMENTS**
COVID-19 struck while rural and regional communities were struggling with combined disasters:

- Black Summer bushfires, Australia’s costliest natural disaster – about $103 billion in property damage and economic losses; an estimated $1 billion lost tourism revenue.
- Devastating droughts causing agricultural jobs to fall about 25%, the number of beef, sheep and grain farmers to halve, and GDP and some community populations to fall.
- Widespread flooding particularly in Queensland and NSW in February 2020 and March 2021.

Women and young people are feeling the worst of the COVID-19 impacts which have been hardest on sectors employing more women - hospitality, travel, tourism, accommodation, creative arts, sport, recreation, store-based retail, tertiary education.

Women and young people accounted for most Victorian job losses. Victoria has the most unemployed women in its history. Policy responses - early access to superannuation and education reforms, have compounded the impact on women. Reports of family violence have significantly increased.

We must better understand the effects of necessary COVID measures on women and young people and design support/recovery measures accordingly.

COVID reactivation/recovery is integral to communities’ successful regeneration and resilience. While economic resilience needs support, accelerating action on climate change is fundamental to recovery. This action can combine that objective with innovative approaches to job creation.

Equally important are public health and safety, providing scope to encourage emotional resilience and community connection. Opportunities exist to strengthen social infrastructure to reduce vulnerability in emergencies.

Municipalities lost about $925 million revenue during the freeze on FAG indexation - funds needed for local roads and crucial infrastructure. It was hardest on rural/regional areas.

The value of FAGs has declined over 25 years from about 1% to 0.55% of Commonwealth Taxation Revenue.
While the COVID-19 impacts are felt by all, special consideration is needed for rural and regional communities experiencing these combined setbacks.

12.1
Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to provide additional direct funding to significantly impacted local government bodies from 2020 to support ongoing recovery efforts which are well in excess of regional and rural councils being able to address.

OBJECTIVE
Disaster Recovery

KEY ARGUMENTS
- Councils have been provided funding to support community lead recovery; this is coming at the expense of other key projects and at a cost of already stretched local government budgets.
- Bega Valley Shire Council, the most disaster impacted local government body in Australia in the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC assessment against a new Disaster Resilience Index, has continuing need to support its community recover and build resilience for the future.
- Recovery from disaster takes considerable time. The Tathra/Reedy Swamp event of March 2018 is still seeing considerable recovery needs.
- BVSC absolutely appreciates the support provided from both the NSW State Government and the Federal Government
- Project funding has been slowly rolling out

Much support offered in 2020 was welcome however the needs do not go away in 12 months and those significantly impacted LGAs need ongoing support to support communities rebuild and look to the future.

13
Shoalhaven City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish a permanent Disaster Levy as an income tax levy, to establish a funding base to empower Local Government to support our communities with resilience and disaster recovery.

OBJECTIVE
Local Government, as the front-line tier of government during natural disasters, needs to be adequately resourced to support communities. This impacts upon all Councils in Australia.

KEY ARGUMENTS
In recovery, there is an urgency to getting funding into areas as soon as possible. Announcements of funding availability were made by the Federal and State Governments quickly after the fires impacted our regions – and these were most appreciated. However, in some instances, the application process has resulted in substantial delays in being able to respond.

The experience of the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires indicated the following rapid-response interventions were needed to ensure community recovery and resilience:
- Waste disposal
- Road and bridge repairs
- Telecommunications reinstatement
- Water supplies and sewer repairs.
- Power supply provision
- Temporary accommodation
- Food and urgent necessities
- Mental health support
- Fencing repairs to contain livestock
- Distribution and storage of donations and supplies
- Establishment and staffing of recovery centres and assistance points
- Financial assistance

A readily available funding base will assist in facilitating Local Government to provide urgent assistance to the community.

14
Bellingen Shire Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to release the $4 billion in unallocated Emergency Response Funds to the 537 State and Territory Local Government Councils across the nation to increase local community capacity to implement sustainable and effective community disaster recovery, preparedness and resilience initiatives.

OBJECTIVE
To strengthen local community capacity to identify and establish foundational programs that enhance social cohesion and create community partnerships to address the environmental, social and economic challenges our Nation faces now and into the future due to the recent drought, bushfires, floods and the current pandemic crisis.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The release of $4 billion in unallocated Emergency Response Funds to 537 State and Territory Local Government Councils would immediately and effectively fund local community driven programs, projects and initiatives to proactively address the following challenges:

- Housing Crisis: Local communities are struggling to provide existing and new community members with affordable housing options due to the financial and social impacts of the recent drought, bushfires, floods and the current pandemic crisis.
- Issues relating to local housing availability, increased property prices, rents, insurances, cost of living and mortgage stress challenges require a suite of community driven short, medium and long-term strategies to deliver a proactive response to the National homelessness issue.
- Drought, Fire & Floods: The impacts of sustained drought conditions, an unprecedented bush fire season and severe flooding, have resulted in a significant increase in the scale and cost of community infrastructure maintenance, repair and rehabilitation (MR&R) works to ensure essential access to transport corridors and services.
- Environment: Local driven and funded community programs, projects and initiatives are necessary to promote environmental recovery, preparedness and resilience opportunities and initiatives to address and mitigate the impacts of these extreme climate events.
- Accordingly, a partnership-based model should be employed that harnesses the expertise of local subject matter experts and community organisations to explore, identify and deliver environmental recovery initiatives that address the National water and food security crisis affecting our local communities.
• Business & Tourism: Local businesses are challenged by financial sustainability issues and the impacts of the recent drought, fires, floods and current COVID-19 pandemic have not eased the burden small business owners carry.

At a National level, the broader local community needs to be engaged to explore local initiatives that will provide long-term solutions to the economic impacts they will face in the years ahead.

15
Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to audit, report on, and hasten financial relief to those who have applied for bushfire relief.

OBJECTIVE
Disaster recovery; Social cohesion; rural well-being.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Federal, State and Local governments have offered a range of grants to assist those who suffered from catastrophic bushfires. However, support has been slow to reach those in need; guidelines are complex; responsibility is shifted between levels of government and recipients complain of stress in sorting the bureaucracy. A national register of grant recipients would assist applicants.

16
Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW

That this National General Assembly of Local Government call on the Commonwealth and states and Territory Governments to ensure that ALGA, State Associations and local Councils are appropriately represented on advisory groups and projects linked to the new National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency being established by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to ensure that both local government local and community voices are heard in the important work that will be led by this agency.

OBJECTIVE
Disaster Recovery

KEY ARGUMENTS
• This new agency will be the key strategic driver for improving resilience, relief, recovery, risk reduction for communities across Australia.
• It is critical that from establishment this new agency consults with and engages directly with local government who provides the key government interface in this area.
• It is also key that the voices of local communities are also heard.

17
Nillumbik Shire Council, VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work closely with state and local government to develop appropriate implementation frameworks and make available greater funding – either through the extension of its Smart Cities and Suburbs program or a new initiative, to enable local governments and their communities to implement the latest networking and monitoring technology in their efforts to improve bushfire preparedness and climate resilience.
OBJECTIVE
The fires which burned through large swathes of Australia’s southeast over the summer of 2019-2020, further highlighted the increasing threat posed by climate-driven weather events to life and property.

Local governments, working closely with the various emergency agencies and the community, must be at the forefront of the response to these increasing threats.

Bushfires can have devastating and far-reaching impacts on communities, impacts that can be exacerbated through a lack of mitigation measures and resilience. The evidence is clear that the physical, social and economic effects of such disasters are far greater where communities have been unprepared.

Also, beyond doubt is that the effects of climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of bushfires as well as that of other extreme weather events.

Councils have a key role in the response to these challenges. Nillumbik, as do other Councils, already works in close collaboration with its community, the various emergency service agencies and state government to address these issues collectively. This is particularly the case in bushfire mitigation.

To do so effectively however – especially for this approach to be replicated nationally – will require not just the will, but also the resources to boost capability. Technology becomes increasingly important in this context and can assist councils build community resilience.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Nillumbik Shire has over the years been subject to significant weather events - fire (including the Black Saturday Bushfires of 2009), floods and severe windstorms.

It comprises both urban and rural areas and therefore, Council and the community are acutely aware of the very real threats and challenges posed by such events in a range of settings.

The challenges Council faces in this regard include Nillumbik’s extensive bushland and its close proximity to the urban fringe, its river frontage and its high proportion of privately-owned land.

Council’s Bushfire Mitigation Strategy emphasizes that bushfire mitigation is a shared responsibility between Council and a range of other stakeholders, including community, agencies and other levels of government.

It also places a strong emphasis on information-sharing.

Council is also in the process of developing its new Climate Action Plan. This undertaking will, in both, development and implementation emphasize a community-centred approach.

For this approach to work, information-sharing as well as ready access to accurate, real-time information is critical.

There are a number of products on the market with highly sensitive sensor detection capabilities that include fire detection, air quality and flood monitoring. They can also be used to closely monitor biodiversity in a given area.

The technology has been effectively implemented elsewhere – including in Victoria’s Latrobe Valley – but implementation to date has been piecemeal.

What is needed is a coordinated approach on a national scale but which recognizes the importance of a local-led response.
This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to include a 'pandemic' under the definition of an 'eligible disaster' under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Guidelines to enable local government costs to be claimed in line with other 'disaster' events.

**OBJECTIVE**

Across the nation local governments have worked in partnership with the Australian Government and their respective state governments since the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 to support measures aimed at keeping the public safe as well as minimising the risks and impacts of the pandemic. As a consequence, many Councils have incurred direct and, in some cases, significant costs which are not recoverable under DRFA.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

The DRFA is a joint funding initiative of the Australian & state governments to provide disaster relief and recovery payments to help communities recover from the effects of natural disasters and terrorist acts. The eligible natural disasters include bushfire, cyclone, earthquake, flood, landslip, meteor strike, storm, storm surge, tornado and tsunami. A ‘pandemic’ is not included and whilst not having the same level of impact on public assets as those hazards already included, its community wide economic and social impacts can be more severe and long term.

Councils play a significant role in disaster relief and recovery activities in conjunction with the Australian and state governments when natural disasters occur and have been called upon to assist with the COVID-19 outbreak. An example of this has been in supporting State border closures arising out of decisions of the National Cabinet and in accordance with agreed protocols.

On the Queensland / NSW border, the following councils have played a major role in supporting border control and security arrangements, and as a consequence incurred the following costs:

- Paroo Shire Council - $329,711
- Balonne Shire Council - $111,092
- Southern Downs Regional Council - $105,199
- Goondiwindi Shire Council - $57,072, and
- Bulloo Shire Council - $17,431

Regrettably, these costs are not eligible under DRFA and the full costs are borne by the impacted councils. Similar costs may have been incurred by ‘border’ councils in other states.

Under the DRFA these costs would be eligible and identified as Category B – Counter Disaster Operations, as they are extraordinary costs associated with eligible activities aimed at protecting the general public and ensuring public health and safety in public areas (e.g., the community as a whole will benefit from the activity being undertaken). Notwithstanding previous decisions by the Australian Government rejecting the inclusion of ‘pandemics’ as eligible under the DRFA, the scale of the impact of COVID-19 on local government highlights the need for this position to be reviewed to avoid the financial hardship imposed on Councils.

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide funding and resources for circular economy capability building and support for the development of Circular Economy Action Plans for local government.
OBJECTIVE
The current economic system is predominantly linear, following a take-make consume-waste approach to using resources. A vast amount of raw materials are transformed into products and end up in landfill, using more resources than can be regenerated. The global economic landscape is undergoing a significant shift from a linear economy to a circular economy (CE), which aims to decouple economic activity from consumption of finite resources and redefine waste, so products stay in closed loop cycles. This shift is reflected in the increase in CE strategies at OECD, EU, national, regional and local levels. Australian states, including NSW and Victoria, are also introducing CE policy statements.

While this is a positive move, the impacts of these global shifts and policy statements are increasingly felt at local government level, such as the Chinese National Sword policy and the sharing economy business model. Significant resources have been deployed internationally for CE capability building and to develop action plans to support local and regional initiatives during this transition. Australia needs to similarly support local governments facing these challenges and this requires expertise, funding and support so all regions have access to the resources needed to manage the impacts, and unlock the opportunities, of CE.

KEY ARGUMENTS
There is significant international momentum behind the transition to a circular economy. China adopted it as legislation in 2009, which was a key driver for the National Sword policy, causing a significant impact on global recycling sectors. Similarly, the EU has invested billions of dollars into successive Circular Economy Action Plans, and in 2018 both parties signed an MOU for the acceleration of CE. This significant global shift presents tangible and urgent challenges to local governments and communities, often without local knowledge of the CE landscape or the expertise needed to manage the impacts. It also leads to potential lost opportunities created by the shift to a circular economy, which are well documented by multiple reports, such as job creation/substitution, lower carbon economies, climate change mitigation and greater value creation through processing resources at local levels.

The conceptual framework for the circular economy in cities and regions addresses many of the challenges identified in the CSIRO National Outlook 2019, including demographic megatrends (particularly in Asia), technological change, climate change/environmental concerns and social cohesion due to erosion of trust in government and institutions. Local governments have a key role to play as promoters, facilitators and enablers of a circular economy. Adequate economic and governance conditions should be in place to unlock CE’s potential.

While all councils can benefit from a CE approach, many opportunities can only be leveraged through collaboration across regions and at a national level. A government focus on enabling the transition to a circular economy would enable cross-sector, government, academic and community partnerships to not only manage the impacts of this transition but to leverage it as an opportunity for inclusive and sustainable economic development.

The National General Assembly calls on Australian Government to fund and invite industry and local government representatives to establish a National Waste and Resource Recovery Working Group to develop clear standards and guidelines for the management, storage, and collection of resource recovery material from all development types (residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use).

OBJECTIVE
The establishment and refinement of a cyclical economy for waste and recyclable material is an important objective of the national and state governments (recycling banned to China, need to more national manufacturing of recyclable materials). It is therefore important that the source of material (waste and recyclables) is appropriately sorted, stored and collected. This in turn will ensure that the processing of the material is efficient with a consistent standard of source material.

Improved education and training nationally to ensure everyone is fully aware of their waste and recycling obligations, regardless of their location, and building type.

Standardised waste and resource recovery methods (bin colours, bin types, collection technologies and new alternative systems and collection practices specific to dwellings. This includes single unit dwellings (SUDs), Multi-Unit Dwellings (MUDs), Residential Flat Buildings (RFBs) and Mixed-Use Dwellings.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

A consistent national approach for the sorting, storage and collection of waste and resource recovery (recyclable) materials to:

- Ensure uniform standards for recyclable material for domestic processing and refinement
- Ensure waste and resource recovery messaging and education is consistent across Australia.
- Improves resource recovery opportunities while reducing contamination levels across streams
- Ensure consistent development standards, controls, and infrastructure for residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use developments

**Background Material**

- China Sword
- Contamination rates in recyclable material
- Inconsistent development standards and impact on waste and recycling collection

Negative effects on residential amenity and real estate values.

---

21

**Shoalhaven City Council, NSW**

This National General Assembly expresses its support for Federal Government investment in a jobs-rich conservation and land management stimulus package as part of the economic response to COVID-19.

**OBJECTIVE**

Continuing Government investment in land-based sectors in the wake of COVID-19 will help assure the future employment and economic prospects in the regions.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

The Australian and State Governments last year proposed a $4 billion stimulus package. In light of this stimulus package, 70 conservation, farming and land management organisations have sought local government support for a proposal for a jobs-rich investment in conservation and land management across Australia as part of broader economic stimulus measures in the wake of COVID-19. Supporters of this proposal include Local Government NSW, Landcare, the National Farmers Federation, NRM Regions Australia, the Australian Land Conservation Alliance, the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators.

Local Governments play a pivotal role in delivering conservation and land management work, such as controlling weeds, protecting and restoring habitat, and managing public land and are ideally placed to manage a surge in effort for on ground conservation work. During the period of economic
recovery, there is scope for tens of thousands of skilled and unskilled workers to be employed in the conservation and land management sector in roles that are:

- practical and labour intensive;
- located in both regional and metropolitan areas;
- appropriate for temporarily repurposing existing workforces which are under pressure, including tradespeople and workers in the tourism and small business sectors;
- contributing to building Australia’s natural capital, through helping improve land condition and resilience; and
- supportive of long-term sustainability of food and fibre production.

Such a program presents important opportunities for safe, meaningful and socially beneficial work as part of the ‘bridge to recovery’, while leaving enduring benefits for the environment, tourism and farm businesses. An effective program design could provide jobs to many unemployed and underemployed people to undertake practical conservation activities such as weed and pest control, river restoration and bushfire recovery and resilience.

We call upon the Federal Government to support continuing investment in these sectors.

22
Maribyrnong City Council, VIC

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to provide sector wide non-competitive grants for Local Government to implement Urban Forest Strategies and landscape restoration projects.

OBJECTIVE
Forming part of the strong push towards protecting the devastating impacts of climate change, providing sector wide non-competitive grants will stimulate the environment and outline the Federal Government’s commitment to climate change.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Greening our cities and restoring habitats through revegetation projects contributes to improved climate, air pollution, and biodiversity conservation outcomes.

22.1
Blacktown City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide funding to address the urgent need to increase tree canopy cover in rapidly developing outer metropolitan areas, as these areas are highly vulnerable to the impacts of urban heat.

OBJECTIVE
Community resilience. Due to climate change, this is an increasingly important issue. Local governments play a critical role in building resilient and sustainable communities and helping to buffer people and places against environmental disruptions. One critical area is through the provision of resilient infrastructure.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The existing baseline levels of green cover, including tree canopy cover, are often low in Australia’s outer metropolitan areas. Rapidly developing outer metropolitan areas face the challenge that green cover is being lost and replaced with a corresponding increase of often heat-absorbing hard
surfaces. These factors combine to reduce shading and natural evaporative cooling processes, raising local levels of urban heat which exacerbate heat stress in summer.

The Greener Spaces Better Places green cover benchmarking research* showed that outer metropolitan areas are among the most vulnerable to heat. Outer metropolitan areas with low baseline levels of canopy cover, high vulnerability to heat and high-level challenges will require targeted assistance in order to increase tree canopy cover to adequate levels.

In assessing vulnerability, the prevalence of hot conditions, poor health, economic disadvantage and access to green spaces, are important considerations.

Assistance should be targeted directly to tree-planting programs and to support innovative models of outer metropolitan development that promote the establishment of tree canopy cover.


---

23

Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD

That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish a mechanism to enable the provision of funding and resources to local governments in order for them to review the Environmental Impact Statements of Major Projects assessed in accordance with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

OBJECTIVE

The Commonwealth administers the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and has entered into bilateral agreements with States and Territories to accredit assessment processes. That legislation provides for the environmental assessment of major projects such as mining projects and nationally sponsored transport infrastructure projects such as Inland Rail.

Projects assessed under this legislation are often of national significance and may have national benefits - although the associated impacts are more often felt at a local and regional level. Our communities can suffer significant harm if the impacts of these projects are not fully considered through a local and regional lens.

The Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) associated with these projects look to identify the impacts of such projects and are, by necessity, substantial and technical documents. Many local governments will not have suitable specialised expertise on staff and will need to procure this expertise to ensure an appropriate level of review and assessment.

The Australian Government has advised that there is currently no mechanism or fund to reimburse local governments for this expenditure. To ensure thorough review and to avoid delay to significant projects, a suitable mechanism and fund needs to be established to enable this assessment.

KEY ARGUMENTS

The EPBC Act provides a framework to protect and manage nationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities etc. Under this legislation, the Commonwealth is responsible for assessing and approving actions (projects) such as ports and mines which may impact on matters of national environmental significance.

These projects often provide national benefits such as enhanced employment and industry diversification. However, they also can impose substantial impacts on communities. The associated Environmental Studies are necessarily significant pieces of work. For example, the recent EIS for the Border to Gowrie Inland Rail project was 24,000 pages of highly technical and specialised content.
The review of such studies requires substantial expertise and resourcing that is usually not available within local governments. In the Inland Rail EIS context there is substantial detail to be reviewed on:

- Flora and Fauna
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Hydrology
- Groundwater
- Social Impacts
- Economics
- Cultural heritage
- Traffic and Transport
- Hazard and Risk
- Waste
- Landscape and Visual Amenity

This is on top of the actual design, legal and regulatory approval considerations. Clearly this is beyond the ‘business as usual’ assessments that local governments are ordinarily resourced to consider. Accordingly, the additional resources to review this work needs to be procured by the local government.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications has been approached to assist with resourcing of such assessment work for national projects. While recognising the issue, and sympathetic to local government concerns, the Department has advised that there is no funding mechanism available to enable the Commonwealth to assist local governments with the resourcing required to properly review these studies.

This needs to be addressed to ensure local governments on behalf of communities can determine the adequacy of the assessment of the local impacts of such major projects.

24
Mitcham Council, SA

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to investigate the environmental impacts of artificial turf and more environmentally appropriate alternatives for sporting surfaces.

OBJECTIVE
The objective of the motion is to secure funding and delivery of a national decision framework to be used by State and Local Governments to inform decisions relating to artificial vs natural turf sport surfaces.

The project will also fund research and development into how the negative impacts of artificial turf can be overcome in consultation with artificial turf manufacturers, landscape designers and open space managers. This links to the challenges outlined by Australia National Outlook 2019 released by the CSIRO:

A broad range of impacts will be experienced in Australia as a result of global climate change, the severity of which will depend on the effectiveness of global emission reductions and local adaptation. These impacts will increase stress on Australia’s ecosystems that are already threatened, and significantly affect agriculture, forestry, fisheries, transport, health, tourism, finance and disaster.
risk management. It is possible to strive towards zero emissions through a range of actions that target key sectors including energy, land use, urban infrastructure and industrial systems.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

Sporting and community clubs across the country are receiving grants to install artificial turf for sports fields and there are a number of pipeline projects about to hit the City of Mitcham for approval. The majority of councils currently do not have formal policy positions on “artificial vs natural” turf within open space and sports and recreation areas. Awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in relation to artificial and natural turf type selections (as flagged by a range of information the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in Western Australia “Natural Grass vs Synthetic Turf Decision Making Guide”) is limited. A recent Adapt West Heat Mapping study in South Australia also revealed that artificial turf was eight degrees warmer than average surface temperatures across the region. The health of current and future sports field / open space users, given projected increases in extreme heat, as well as the potential creation of heat islands impacting the surrounding community are of concern.

Other studies have also revealed that artificial turf has a higher carbon footprint and contributes to waste to landfill as it currently cannot be recycled. Given the time spent to research and debate the issue within the City of Mitcham and the polarised views in the community, City of Mitcham intend to raise the issue (in parallel to this motion) with the Department of Environment and Water (DEW), the Office of Open Space, Recreation and Racing and the South Australian Local Government Authority (SA LGA). These discussions to include ascertaining interest in pursuing further research and development in this area as well as the development of a wider decision framework which considers the economic, social and environmental criteria to help guide how projects are approved and delivered.

25
Maribyrnong City Council, VIC

That this National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to:

- formally recognise we are in a state of climate emergency;
- appoint a Minister for Climate Change/Emergency to champion climate change efforts across the country
- establish a National Climate Change Taskforce to enable a whole-of-government approach to climate action
- commit to actively work with Local Government, industry and communities to:
  - reduce waste production,
  - set a zero emissions target
  - support the development of renewable energy industries
  - provide incentives to all sectors to change to more efficient technologies
  - significantly increase urban vegetation cover and rehabilitate degraded rural environments
  - increase support for households to access energy efficient demands

**OBJECTIVE**

In recent years, there has been increasing a push from across the world and across all tiers of Australian government on proactive action targeting climate change and to declare a climate emergency. Many local governments across Australia have already declared a climate emergency and it is incumbent upon the Federal Government to take the lead on this issue.
KEY ARGUMENTS
With the recognition of the climate emergency by many local councils across Australia, and over 1,432 jurisdictions and 28 countries worldwide, the need for urgent action by all tiers of government and community is apparent. The collective recognition of the climate emergency by state and federal government will greatly assist and affirm the commitment by all tiers of government in addressing climate change and the climate emergency. To enable a targeted and whole-of-government approach to climate action, a taskforce needs to be established to identify and provide budget allocation recommendations to government so there is a collective way forward and commitment to fund and act on the climate emergency.

25.1
Brimbank City Council, VIC

The National General Assembly writes to the Prime Minister and Minister for Environment, calling on the Federal Government to declare a climate emergency, and to invest in energy, circular economy and conservation initiatives that help reduce carbon emissions, and protect, enhance and restore environmental and sustainability outcomes across local communities as part of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

OBJECTIVE
The themes and priorities contained in this motion are consistent with ALGA's National Strategic Objective of "Addressing the risks of climate change", which seeks action by all levels of government to mitigate climate change and seek support for a new $200 million Local Government Climate Partnership Fund to support councils to help their communities reduce emissions and transition to the future. It is widely accepted by leading scientists and health professionals, that the effects of climate change are leading to more extreme and severe weather events- impacting all local communities across Australia. The frequency, severity and impacts of bushfires, droughts, floods, heatwaves, coastal erosion, and the urban island heat effect are not only becoming more intense, but also creating more severe health, wellbeing, safety and economic ramifications for local communities who feel the brunt of these respective weather events. National leadership, strategy and investment is required to help support local communities and local councils to prepare, adapt, respond, and mitigate the effects of climate change and global warming in targeted, meaningful and effective ways.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Climate change is an international environmental and ecological emergency, which is mobilising communities to take local action, whilst advocating for national and global leadership. The Earth’s average temperature has increased 1 degree Celsius since the industrial revolution commenced in circa 1750AD, and has principally been attributed to human actions that have turned carbon stored in solid and liquid forms, such as ancient coal and oil deposits, into carbon in gas form in the air. The more carbon and other greenhouse gases in the air mean more heat is trapped, disrupting the stable climate we have become accustomed to.

Globally, global warming is now likely to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2052. Warming is forecast to continue increasing at the current rate, and by 3 to 5 degrees of warming by the end of the century, unless significant positive change is made. The risks associated with climate change will increase with global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, creating significant impacts in terms of health impacts of people, and all other living things and ecosystems.

Human activity has largely been attributed to the cause of carbon emissions being generated which is putting pressure on increasing global temperatures and more extreme weather events. In Australia alone, burning fossil fuels is responsible for 79% of all emissions nationally. The Australian Government has adopted a 26-28% carbon reduction commitment below its 2005 emission levels by
2030 as its target for Paris. However, in the lead up to the meeting of Australia’s legislated and independent climate policy advisory board, the Climate Change Authority, advised that Australia needs to reduce emissions in the order of 45-63% below 2005 levels by 2030 to be in line with climate science. This means Australia’s current national approach is roughly less than half of what is needed. In response to these concerning trends, many local communities, through local governments, as well as state and territory governments, have begun to increasingly take action in the absence of firm national leadership, through ‘Climate Emergency’ Declarations.

26
Yarra City Council, VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to establish a funding stream for local governments to support their efforts in climate adaptation and mitigation in their local communities.

OBJECTIVE
Tackling climate change - reducing emissions to meet global commitments and adapt to its impacts through increased heat, drought and extreme weather events is the responsibility of all levels of government. Local governments have been for many years taking action to mitigate and adapt to climate change on behalf of their communities. Local governments can connect quickly with and act effectively on behalf of their communities, playing a unique role in responding to the impacts of climate change. Adaptation will become more important and costly over time; however local governments receive the least funding of any level of government.

KEY ARGUMENTS
“As the level of government closest to the community, Australia’s 537 councils can influence individuals, households and businesses to reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change. Australian councils are responsible for urban planning, land use and building approvals, waste management and the provision of community infrastructure and services. That makes them among Australia’s most significant infrastructure owners and managers, with collective responsibility for over $380 billion in infrastructure and land.”

ClimateWorks (2020) Net Zero Momentum Tracker, Local Government Sector) Climate mitigation and adaptation is a core role of local governments in managing their infrastructure and delivering their core services, but these come at an increasing cost.

Beyond their own operations, local governments are in a position of direct influence, supporting communities to reduce emissions and contribute to national commitments under the Paris Agreement. With actions as diverse as energy audits and retrofits to low income households, collective renewable energy purchase agreements, providing public electric vehicle charging stations, and ESD criteria in planning approvals, councils are in a box seat to significantly influence emissions as a nation.

Councils have ambitious goals for reaching net zero in their emissions. ClimateWorks found in 2020 that 37% of Australian councils have a target for reaching zero community emissions by or before 2050. Some councils, like Yarra City Council, have stronger ambitions for net zero community emissions by 2030.

Councils can deliver a substantial reduction in Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions, providing benefit to their communities and meeting our international obligations. However, with just 3.4% of all revenue raised by taxes, councils lack the resources to do this at the scale possible. Federal funding support for national goals, delivered at a local level is needed to ensure that Australian local governments can continue build momentum for a nationwide transition to net zero emissions.
26.1
Orange City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to develop a discrete and equitable funding program that provides local government authorities with the resources needed to mitigate and adapt to the current and longer-term impacts of climate change on the physical and social infrastructure of local communities.

OBJECTIVE
Climate change is impacting and will increasingly impact into the future on Council resilience and community resilience for all Australians. The preceding decade was the hottest on record with climate scientists predicting that warming will continue while rainfall will become less frequent but significantly more intense.

Impacts of climate change on ageing infrastructure include potable water management and road maintenance problems resulting from extreme weather events such as storms and floods; urban centres developing potentially extreme heat zones, generated by the loss of green space and heating effects of built infrastructure; local emergency and medical services experiencing greater demand; and social infrastructure such as volunteer services, community transport and social activities disrupted by changing weather patterns and extreme weather events.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Infrastructure across Australia is ageing, frequently dating from the post-war period. There are already significant costs associated with its maintenance, and these will be exacerbated by the impacts of current and future climate change.

Much of Australia’s built infrastructure is vulnerable to heating and large-scale rainfall which are predicted to become more intense as the climate changes. It’s also likely that the physical and mental health of communities will suffer.

Many Councils already struggle to meet the costs of delivering services to local communities and climate change will place additional stresses on their capacity and resources. Regional infrastructure is likely to feel significant strain as people move from crowded metropolitan centres seeking more space and a cooler climate.

This motion asks the Australian Government to recognise the economic and social impacts of climate change on our nation, and to develop a just resourcing plan that will ensure local governments can deliver services at a level consistent with the expectations of a modern developed country.

26.2
Snowy Monaro Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to work with ALGA and State and Territory governments, to urgently develop, in addition to any other funding currently provided to local government, a discrete, equitable, apolitical funding formula, 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.

OBJECTIVE
Extreme Weather Events affect everyone. The preceding decade is the hottest on record; climate scientists predict heating to continue while rain becomes less frequent, but significantly more intense. Impacts of extreme events on ageing and ill-adapted infrastructure across Council areas include:

- Bushfire impacts on people and built infrastructure
• Heat and floods, causing, road, river, and drinking water management problems
• Coastal erosion caused by intense storms and king tides, necessitating costly rehabilitation to retain coastal integrity and biodiversity; compounded by visitation as people seek to escape the heat.
• Urban and peri-urban centres confronting potentially lethal heat zones, generated by the loss of green space and heating effects of built infrastructure; energy demands during peak activity will exert stress on the grid and buildings.
• Local emergency and medical services experiencing greater demand; heat stroke is a major cause of death and disability for vulnerable people, especially the aged. Respiratory illness will likely rise as the levels of CO2 in the atmosphere increase.

Social infrastructure disrupted by the loss of significant volunteer services of older/retired Australians; losing these people will decimate our capacity to provide social infrastructure such as voluntary respite carers, community transport, and social activities.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

Infrastructure across Australia is ageing, frequently dating from the post-war period; there are already significant costs associated with its maintenance, and these will be exacerbated by the impacts of current and future extreme weather events.

Much of Australia’s built infrastructure is vulnerable to heating and large-scale rainfall predicted to become more intense as the climate changes; as well we can expect communities’ physical and mental health to suffer. Councils already struggle to meet the costs of delivering services to local communities; extreme weather events will place additional and intolerable stresses on their capacity and resources.

The personal economic impacts of extreme weather events on populations will likely reduce income and increase debt, particularly in rural areas dependent on agriculture, forecast to suffer under a changing climate. Councils can expect higher levels of late or no payment on rates and charges and strong rejection from residents of any rise in charges to meet shortfalls.

Inadequate regional infrastructure is likely to feel significant strain as populations desert crowded urban centres seeking space and a cooler climate.

This motion asks the Federal government to recognise the economic and social impacts of extreme weather events on our nation, and to develop a just resourcing plan that will ensure local governments can deliver services at a level consistent with the expectations of a modern developed country.

Links and references

https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/learn-about-heat-islands
https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/heat-island-impacts
https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/heat-island-cooling-strategies
This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to develop a revised Carbon Farming Initiative (Program) that is able to adapt to local community circumstances to maximise its intended benefits and minimise any cumulative and unintended negative consequences.

**OBJECTIVE**
The Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) is a nationwide voluntary carbon offsets scheme. It is an integral component of the Australian Government’s Emissions Reduction Fund and allows land managers to earn carbon credits by changing land use or management practices to store carbon or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The initiative is administered by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**
Carbon Farming Initiative contracts for sequestering carbon through native vegetation regrowth are commonly known as “carbon areas”.

Carbon areas issued via the CFI are:
- Nationally 44,483,043
- Queensland 11,233,895
- South West Queensland 8,896,000 (20 percent approx.)
- Paroo Shire 3,572,904 (8 percent of national total)

Establishment of carbon areas by pastoralists on a portion of their land has the opportunity to provide another income stream, free up capital for investing in the productivity of the property as well as assisting with balance sheet repair during drought. These carbon areas are not the issue.

The issue or practice that is having the largest material impact in SWQ is when entire properties are solely dedicated as carbon areas by removing any pastoral activity.

The consequence of this has been:
- Depopulation as owners (their families) and employees are no longer needed to tend to stock and maintain pastoral capacity.
- On property operational expenditure and capital improvements are minimal.
- Landscape priorities change, and the emphasis on weed, pest and fire management are no longer a priority compared to the adjacent grazing fraternity.
- The removal of livestock means the need for fencing and good neighbour cooperation is eroded.
- Campaigns for pest management (e.g., wild dog baiting) and landscape infrastructure (e.g., cluster fencing) becomes difficult to coordinate.
- Local government is still obliged to deliver its services (roads, etc.) into these areas, whilst at the same time, collecting less rate revenue from these properties.

Unfortunately, the experience is South West Queensland is that the national environmental benefits and individual property advantage from the CFI are offset by many cumulative and unintended negative consequences – which are impacting neighbouring properties, the district, local businesses and the local government. The proposal to review and develop a more adaptive Program seeks to fully understand and evaluate these impacts, develop mitigation strategies as well as leverage the benefits of the program.
Randwick City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Australian Government to:

Support a just transition to an environmentally and socially sustainable economy and society by:

a. upholding the Sovereignty demands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people expressing Inherent Custodial Rights to protect land, water, sky, culture and community;

b. transitioning to net zero emissions by 2050;

c. developing policies across the economic, environmental, social, education/training and labour portfolios needed to provide an enabling environment for enterprises, workers, investors and consumers to drive the transition towards an environmentally sustainable and inclusive economy and society; and

d. integrating provisions for a just transition into national plans and policies for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and national environmental and climate change action plans.

OBJECTIVE

This motion addresses the key question in the 2021 discussion paper: What are the best models available to councils to ensure that our communities thrive and focus on prevention and preparation rather than relief and recovery? How can the Australian Government partner with councils to ensure thriving communities?

1. to recognise the urgent need to address the current and future impacts of human induced climate change and environmental destruction;

2. to prevent further detrimental impacts of coal mining and onshore gas extraction on communities and on the environment;

3. to commence the transition to a low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economy where growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment into such economic activities, infrastructure and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems;

4. to ensure no worker is left behind in the transition to a 100% renewable economy.

KEY ARGUMENTS

In the absence of policies global warming is expected, to reach 4.1 °C – 4.8 °C above pre-industrial by the end of the century. Current policies presently in place around the world are projected to reduce baseline emissions and result in about 3.3°C warming above pre-industrial levels.

In 2010, Beyond Zero Emissions calculated the cost of changing from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy would be approximately $8 per household per week, and the cost of solar and wind has fallen significantly since then. In contrast, the economic, human and environmental cost of ignoring climate change is incalculable. In Australia, the potential replacement cost of residential buildings exposed to a 1.1m level sea rise is estimated at as much as $63bn.

The Australian government has not initiated a green recovery, instead using the pandemic as a justification to support expansion of the gas industry. The Prime Minister announced the government will invest in the acceleration of gas basin development and also government
intervention in the energy market through building a government-owned 1 GW gas generation plant, creating confusion and uncertainty for investors.

The greening of economies presents many opportunities to achieve social objectives: it has the potential to be a new engine of growth, and a net generator of decent, green jobs that can contribute significantly to poverty eradication and social inclusion. The greening of economies will enhance our ability to manage natural resources sustainably, increase energy efficiency and reduce waste, while addressing inequalities and enhancing resilience. The greening of jobs and the promotion of green jobs, both in traditional and emerging sectors, will foster a competitive, low-carbon, environmentally sustainable economy and patterns of sustainable consumption and production, and contribute to the fight against climate change.

29
Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider a range of alternate water sources when determining the eligibility of projects under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund grants scheme in order to ensure water security for communities and industry across Australia.

OBJECTIVE
The National Water Infrastructure Development Fund (NWIDF) is a rolling 10-year water infrastructure program to fund water infrastructure investments. The fund was established to accelerate the assessment of water infrastructure proposals and to provide secure and affordable water through the construction of economically viable infrastructure. The fund is intended to stimulate regional economic activity and development.

The NWID Fund is vitally important to national and regional water security which remains under threat from ongoing drought conditions in many states. It is critical that the Authority administering that fund consider all potential sources of water depending on the nature of the demand and the full suite of options available.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The National Water Infrastructure Development Fund is administered by the National Water Grid Authority. That Authority is working in partnership with States and Territories to deliver a program of national water infrastructure investments.

Water security is the key for enhanced agricultural production which is the lifeblood of many regional communities. A secure and sustainable future for many of these communities will depend on meeting the food production needs of growing domestic and international populations in times of uncertain and increasingly variable climate.

New sources of water are fundamental to continue, and expand, the agricultural industry and generate jobs and opportunities for investment in industry.

The utilisation of the NWIDF is supported in this endeavour. To make sure the most effective use of this funding all potential sources of water need to be considered.

A review of the NWIDF Capital Fund shows substantial investment in traditional infrastructure such as dams, weirs and pipelines. Such investment is supported, and it is further considered that the National Water Grid Authority should foster and promote all potential water sources beyond the more traditional infrastructure.

In their assessment of projects proposed by State and Territory proposals all potential water sources should be evaluated such as (but are not limited to) traditional storage/pipeline opportunities as
well as purified recycled water, channel upgrades, desalination plants, water harvesting, aquifer recharge etc.

The key aspect is that water security is required for communities, agriculture and industry and all options to efficiently provide additional water security should be promoted and considered in evaluation processes.

29.1
Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on State/Commonwealth Governments to make funding available to develop innovative solutions for alternative water sources to provide for water security.

OBJECTIVE

Water security is an issue important to all states with the current period of drought. Continued increasing pressure on finite water resources means that innovative solutions to water source identification and planning are required. Regional areas without larger population bases do require financial assistance to prepare feasibility investigations and business cases for new water infrastructure.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Continuing drought has made water security for urban areas and other industries a current priority. With pressure on finite water resources it is important that alternative sources and innovative extraction and treatment solutions are developed.

With local governments under increasing financial pressure assistance from state and commonwealth is required to fund water source investigation studies and development of water supplies.

Innovative water sources that could be investigated though assistance could include

- the use of mine void water for non-potable uses such as road maintenance
- the use of disused mine voids for off-stream water storage
- the construction of new dams and weirs
- increasing capacity of existing dams and weirs.

These types of initiatives will improve water security by extending the use of existing water supplies.

The National Water Infrastructure Development Fund is a facility for State Governments to obtain funding for projects. Local government could partner with State Government for project applications. The feasibility round has closed, and the capital component round is open. Local government would like continued access to these funding sources for water security through both State and Federal Government.

29.2
Tamworth City Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal and State Governments to invest additional resources into the CSIRO and other research organisations to further improve available water purification technology, and then commit funding to establish water purification plants to help improve water security for communities.
OBJECTIVE
Recent drought across South Eastern Australia saw many communities faced with the prospect of running out of drinking water. The CSIRO’s State of Climate Report 2020 suggests that with the effects of climate change communities across Australia will be faced with drought more regularly and possibly to a more severe level. Water Purification is a key component in providing greater water security to communities, particularly during times of drought.

KEY ARGUMENTS
During the recent drought many NSW towns faced the invidious consequences of current water management practices of State and Commonwealth governments by all but running out of water. The recent work undertaken by the NSW Government, based on paleoclimate data to produce 10,000 years of synthetic climate data and the possible effects of climate change, paints a very dire situation for drought in the state in the future. Over allocation of surface and groundwater supplies means other sources of water to secure a community’s water supply needs to be investigated.

The treatment of the wastewater stream from existing water purification technology, which currently is very high in salt, is a major issue, particularly inland.

Many local water utilities cannot afford the high costs of advanced technology treatment and will require financial assistance to implement.

30
Mildura Rural City Council, VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government for a review on how low the environmental water allocation became and how we move to rectify this oversight.

OBJECTIVE
This is a national issue because of the ongoing move away from the scientifically based assessment of water needed to replenish the rivers identified in the 2007 Water Act.

This motion should be debated because we are edging closer towards a millennial style drought with thousands of extra permeant plantings which will all be fighting water as it becomes more scarce.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Mildura Rural City Council accepted the matter of an Open Letter by the Australian Institute into Urgent Business so Council could endorse and support its contents, which called on the Honourable Member, Naill Blair MLC to immediately halt floodplain harvesting in NSW. The ongoing crisis in the Darling River has multiple effects on its river communities and applies vast amounts of pressure on the Murray to deliver the water that was previously supplied by the iconic Darling River. This was voted on by MRCC and carried in February of 2019.

31
Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal and State Governments to provide a funding stream aimed to tackle drought mitigation projects that will also provide positive outcomes for firefighting purposes and managing stock routes.

OBJECTIVE
Having established water sources for drought management purposes and then having the ability to utilise this same water source for firefighting and management of stock routes will improve resilience in regional Queensland.
The current funding streams available through the tiers of government tend to be siloed to the extent that it may preclude certain projects from being eligible.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

There is no doubt that regional areas would benefit from multi-use capability water sources that could be funded by the Queensland or Federal Government. The cost of maintenance and depreciation of assets is heavily reduced through minimisation.

The intention would be to increase the capability of both water storage and delivery of water through pumping at these multi-use locations that will result in:

- Improve firefighting capability
- Increased drought resilience
- Improved capability to manage travelling stock on the stock routes.

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to protect national food security and the sustainability of regional irrigation communities by:

- acknowledging irrigation communities were purposefully built by governments to feed and drought-proof the nation
- acknowledging the unintended adverse impacts on regional communities of certain water policy decisions and the operation of water trading markets
- acknowledging that the nation’s primary producers are adept at using water efficiently and responsibly
- providing enhanced water access for general security water holders in regional communities who depend on the availability of this water for their livelihoods
- ensuring decisions foster diversity in agriculture and value adding industries
- reviewing and adjusting timelines for the completion of Murray-Darling Basin projects and plans such as the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Measures (SDLAM) Projects and Water Sharing Plans.

**OBJECTIVE**

Regional irrigation communities were established by our governments over one hundred years ago to feed and drought proof the nation. Water remains the lifeblood of these communities. A clear, realistic and integrated approach to water policy and management needs to be urgently adopted and maintained by governments. This is vital to ensuring balanced social, economic and environmental outcomes can be achieved from water use while protecting long-established regional communities and water-related industries who make a vital contribution to the nation’s economy, food security and social fabric.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

It is in the nation’s interest to preserve and optimise purposely built irrigation schemes and communities. Producers, industries and communities associated with these schemes make a vital contribution to producing food for the nation.

Many regional irrigation communities are under significant stress due to zero or low general security allocations. Water policy, exacerbated by periods of drought, is pushing communities and industries to the edge. General security water holders in regional irrigated communities need more certainty.
• The commoditisation of water has led to many problematic outcomes for communities. Producers and their families are being disadvantaged. There are flow-on effects on businesses, industries and communities who depend on irrigated agriculture and water for their employment and livelihoods.

• Unintended outcomes from the likes of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and water trading policies are eroding the underlying principles of Australia’s water reform agenda. Consequently, the vision of local and other government initiatives to ignite investment, create jobs, grow population and facilitate resettlement opportunities in the regions is being impeded.

• Water trading rules should optimise agricultural endeavour and the use of established on and off-farm infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of irrigation schemes and the most efficient application of available water for agricultural production.

• The negative impact of current water policies on communities is evidenced through the number of inquiries being made into water reform and water trading markets. Examples include the Independent Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions in the Basin Report, the ACCC Murray-Darling Basin Markets Inquiry and the Productivity Commission Murray-Darling Basin Plan Five-year Assessment.

• A clear, holistic and integrated approach to water policy and management needs to be adopted to ensure balanced social, economic and environmental outcomes are achieved from water use and to ensure the sustainability of long-established regional irrigation communities.

33
Melbourne City Council, VIC

That the National General Assembly seeks the express support of the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction and Treasurer for new resources direct to regional groupings of Councils to implement programs that accelerate renewable energy procurement and energy efficiency upgrade projects, especially those that bring Councils, businesses and other organisations together to collectively work towards achieving zero carbon emissions.

OBJECTIVE
Local governments, nationally and internationally, have led the call for action to tackle climate change. Climate change partnerships across levels of government, between local governments and throughout the local government sector is central to this dialogue for the following reasons:

1. Local governments across Australia have been leading the energy transition by investing in renewable energy and delivering programs to support the community transition to a low carbon economy. Actions taken by local government have driven investment in renewable energy, supported job creation, and accelerated decarbonisation of the energy system; thereby supporting the delivery of Australia’s commitments under the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

2. Local government-led renewable energy purchasing is among the most effective ways to reduce emissions in local government emissions profiles and deliver financial benefits to businesses and local communities.

3. Investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy drives job creation at the local level.

4. Energy efficiency improves productivity of the economy as a whole.

Local governments are best placed to support businesses and communities and bring groups together to drive climate action.
KEY ARGUMENTS
The advocacy, leadership and delivery track record of local government provides a foundation for exploring the next steps in accelerating and creating opportunities for efficient and renewable energy.

Local governments have demonstrated that collective renewable energy procurement models are replicable and scalable. Exemplar projects include the two successful Melbourne Renewable Energy Projects, the Victorian Local Government Power Purchase Agreement and the SSROC Power Purchase Agreement.

These agreements are creating new jobs in rural and regional Australia.

Councils recognise that many of the mid-sized energy users in their municipalities want renewable power purchase agreements to power their operations and meet sustainability targets; however they lack the scale, expertise and capability to contract on their own. Councils are well placed to identify businesses and connect them into renewable energy buying groups, and provide support through the transaction process. Group procurements models enable scale which supports renewable energy investment, job creation, and grid decarbonisation.

Energy efficiency upgrades of buildings are the biggest jobs multiplier of any form of clean energy stimulus. Local governments have experience in delivering energy efficiency programs in the commercial and residential sector and are well connected with the community through existing community and economic development teams.

As custodians of the public realm and administrators of the planning system, local governments have a role to play in facilitating the roll-out of domestic, commercial and community-scale batteries. Battery storage technologies deliver benefits to consumers, communities and the electricity system as a whole; and are essential to support the transition to a 100 per cent renewable electricity grid.

34
Town of Gawler Council, SA

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to amend the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) Framework to establish a legal definition of what is required to buy renewable electricity via the electricity grid and claim 100% renewable electricity use and zero emissions. This will establish market-based accounting for renewable electricity, create a single nationally consistent method that applies to electricity and renewable electricity consumption and prevent double counting for all customers including for councils, seeking legally assured, clearly defined and fairly priced renewable electricity.

OBJECTIVE
No legal definition or consistent method of what makes up 100% renewable electricity use so non-legal methods are devised. These cause double counting and sometimes triple counting, inconsistent, uncertain in law and lead to pricing structures that are unfair.

This is a national issue because:

- All customers across Australia including councils should be able to choose, buy and claim renewable electricity use under a consistent legal method assuring integrity and a basis for fair pricing.
- For Councils to lead communities in taking climate action, there is a duty to ensure that households and small to medium businesses also have access to legal, fairly priced renewable electricity choices.
Every customer that has contributed to the National Renewable Electricity Target over the past 20 years has done so as a mandatory contribution on a national basis. Whilst emissions reporting established under the NGER Framework is calculated on state-based grid factors. This prevents fair pricing and consistent business case comparisons.

There is a lack of confidence in GreenPower and end user renewable markets because of double and triple counting and a lack of a legal definition of what makes up 100% renewables use from the grid. GreenPower requires its customers purchase 100% accredited renewables in addition to the national mandatory renewables (20%plus) ergo 120%plus payment.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Without a clear set of legal rules, market participants, scheme creators and consultants have established many different methods to make renewable electricity claims of renewable use which contradict the NGER legislation. These include:

- Purchasing of accredited GreenPower or Large-Scale Certificates (LGCs), surrendered to the Clean Energy regulator.
- Being close to a Renewable Energy Facility.
- A purchasing agreement with a renewable generator but without LGCs.
- Claiming the renewable generation in a state first and making up the difference in GreenPower or LGCs.
- Claiming the mandatory Renewable Power Percentage first and making up the difference in GreenPower or LGCs.
- Establishing behind the meter or in front of the meter renewables (>100 KW size) and claiming use whilst selling LGCs to third parties.

In 2015, the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Scope 2 accounting Guidelines identified market based accounting for renewable electricity that could be adopted by jurisdictions to support end user claims and prevent double counting. Market based accounting is currently used for regular electricity sales where it is not possible to track the exact movement of electrons from a source to a customer. Instead, metering is used to measure inputs and outputs for billing and the same is possible for renewable electricity.

Currently, the NGER Framework applies a physically calculated (state-based) emissions factor for all electricity emissions created in the state divided by all consumers in the state, to apply a factor to electricity use.

South Burnett Regional Council, QLD

That this National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to consider a consistent National Energy Policy approach and legislation that ensures responsible investment in renewable energy projects.

OBJECTIVE
Climate change and environment.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The uncertainty of national climate and energy policies and the State Governments’ renewable energy targets will bring rapid and unknown change to regional communities who currently host traditional baseload coal fired generators. This uncertainty creates a fear within regional communities, whose landholders and local governments are challenged to plan for the growth and economic prosperity of their regions into the future. Impacted local government areas require early
discussions and resources to plan and consider how they may diversify their economic outputs and support the eventual transition of the traditional coal fired workforce to gain employment in other industries locally. Local governments need support and clear guidelines to ensure large scale renewable energy project proponents are responsible in their dealings with communities and held accountable for the construction of their sites, along with a long term commitment to the ongoing maintenance, operations and the infrastructure’s eventual end of life. Governments must ensure prime agricultural land and local primary producers are not displaced by the construction of renewable energy projects on their land and are supported appropriately with legal advice when engaged in this process. As more and more investors explore the feasibility of renewable energy projects in regional communities, these local governments equally seek a commitment from both state and federal government to ensure large scale renewable energy proponents maintain relationships of trust and understanding within the regional communities in which they operate. Local government areas will also need to be supported with planning and resources to ensure the longevity of their regions beyond the closure of coal fired operators which have provided significant direct and indirect economic benefits within these host communities.

36
Shoalhaven City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide employment opportunities nationwide to support Cultural Burning (Indigenous fire management) as a resilience strategy. This would take the form of a core jobs program, amalgamated with conservation management.

OBJECTIVE
A national program of training and employment in Cultural Burning would create positive, enduring outcomes for both natural disaster resilience and economic outlook for local communities.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements identified the importance of Indigenous land management in bushfire mitigation. Recommendations 18.1 and 18.2 invite all levels of government to work with Traditional Owners and Indigenous land and fire management insights to improve natural disaster resilience and public land management. The Commission found that: “Community resilience, specifically the ability of communities to withstand and recover from the impacts of natural disasters, is connected with overall community health and wellbeing” (18.46).

The Commission also stressed the wider role of cultural burning in “a wide range of social, economic and cultural outcomes beyond hazard reduction” (18.18). Its report cites a number of State and Territory programs that are training Indigenous rangers to improve conservation practices, including fire management. For example, “the Queensland Government works with 24 communities around the state by providing grant funding to support the employment of 100 Indigenous Land and Sea rangers”, and “between 70 and 100 full-time rangers are employed” in the Kimberley (18.42).

The Australian Government is encouraged to supplement these State and Territory funded initiatives and to consider national programs that would provide employment opportunities for local communities.

36.1
Willoughby City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to include ‘cultural burns’ as a means of bushfire management within the National Natural Disasters Arrangements report by the Royal Commission.
OBJECTIVE
Local governments need the resources and government support to explore relevance, risks and potential benefits from introduction of cultural burns within their LGAs, including funding, training and resources required to implement these practices locally.

Bushfires devastated areas of Australia from late 2019 - early 2020 in which 33 people lost their lives and more suffered injury, 18 animals were killed by fire, 12M hectares of national parks, forests / rural lands were burned, and 3,094 houses were destroyed. The catastrophic bushfires were unprecedented in Australia.

Many local government areas including Willoughby, are endowed with extensive bushland reserves, for which councils are responsible to manage. Our residents place high value on care and management of these reserves. Many hectares of bushland in local government areas across the Sydney Basin, & NSW generally have been destroyed by bushfire over the years.

Planning is integral to be better prepared for and reduce risk from future bushfires within many LGA across Australia. This may involve collaboration with RFC, neighbouring LGAs, ROCs, and Aboriginal organisations.

‘Cultural burning’ as distinct from ‘hazard reduction’ ‘back burning’ has been discussed and there is need for clear strategy and guidance to enable this to occur within LGAs across Australia.

KEY ARGUMENTS
It has been predicted that bushfires may become more frequent, more extreme, unpredictable and that future bushfire seasons may start earlier and last longer.

There is growing interest in ‘cultural burning’ as part of fire management, based on, & drawing on Aboriginal knowledge and expertise of the practices.

Cultural burning: For tens of thousands of years, Australian flora and fauna evolved in the presence of fire, indeed they depend on it for regrowth and regeneration. Much of this fire was lit by Indigenous Australians who – for at least 50,000 years – lit small fires as they moved around the landscape. This helped them hunt for food, clear pathways and regenerate the bush.

With European settlement came a change to the traditional Indigenous way of life, and burning was interrupted. These fire regimes in concert with waves of invasive species resulted in the dramatic decline of small mammal species as well as some bird, reptile, amphibian and plant species.

Without regular people-lit fires in the cooler months, dry grass builds up and provides fuel for much bigger bushfires caused by lightning at other times of the year. These hotter, larger fires have a devastating effect on vegetation and animals in their path, and they release huge volumes of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere.

The Aboriginal people of Australia have been following their cultural practices including the use of fire to care for their Country. It includes burning (or prevention of burning) for the health of particular plants and animals. It may involve patch burning to create different fire intervals or be used specifically for fuel and hazard reduction purposes.

Cultural Burning involves the application of culturally informed knowledge and ecologically sensitive techniques in the use of fire that are appropriate for the diverse range of landscapes and ecosystems that exist in Australia.

36.2
Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly advocate for Federal support and funding of relevant Indigenous agencies to put in place bushfire hazard reduction 'cool burns'.
OBJECTIVE
Environment - Addressing natural national disasters; recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disasters.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Cultural Burning, practiced by First Nations People for centuries, offers one means to manage bushfire hazard reduction in specific locations. Further research and support for such methods and rollout of new programs was recommended by the Royal Commission. Follow-up is called for to measure any progress on expanding these important practices.

37
Shoalhaven City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to enact legislation to:

1. Exempt hazard reduction burns and the construction of APZs (asset protection zones) from any limitations within Acts or Regulations which restrict any authorised authority from doing so.
2. Repeal or create an easement over any section of a National Park where part of the Park falls within a 200m APZ and vest the management of that land in the local Council.
3. Require private land holders (including Aboriginal Land) to create and maintain a parkland-like cleared area of 200m to act as an APZ at the interface with any urban development requiring an APZ.
4. Require any Government Authority who manages forested areas to properly maintain and improve the construction of fire trails.
5. Consider the construction strategic fire breaks though forested areas including National Parks of a similar width to a major electricity easement.

OBJECTIVE
This impacts upon all Councils in Australia.

KEY ARGUMENTS
We must take action to protect our community as far as possible from another fire event like the Black Summer bushfires and their aftermath. The loss of life and the destruction of property deserves the highest level of response to provide the protection we all deserve. The almost total elimination of entire species from our National Parks is a tragedy. To assist in protect our Towns and Villages from future bushfire attack, we request the Commonwealth Government carry out the above actions as they may apply.

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements made its final report in October 2020. The Commission concluded that (17.37): “Fuel load management, including prescribed burning, can materially reduce the risk to settlements when undertaken in the wildland-urban interface ...prescribed burning is most effective in reducing the severity of bushfires in the first 1-4 years post-treatment. Depending on the severity of the weather and forest type, it can aid suppression for up to approximately 15 years.”

In following the Commission’s recommendations, Local Government seeks legislative approval to conduct effective and proportionate mitigation measures to protect human and natural habitats from bushfires.
Randwick City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Australian Government to:

1) acknowledge that Local Government across Australia continue to demonstrate strong leadership in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by undertaking a range of actions across the nation such as:
   a) supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart which calls on the Australian people to walk with First Nations in a people’s movement for Voice, Treaty, Truth.
   b) by endorsing the Uluru Statement and sharing this support by publicly displaying the Uluru Statement and putting up posters in prominent locations throughout local council areas; and
   c) encouraging all Councils to register support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart on the website https://www.1voiceuluru.org/

2) calls on the Australian Government to support Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the key principles of the ‘Uluru Statement from the Heart’.

Darebin City Council, VIC

That this National General Assembly call for the establishment of an appropriate advisory structure and/or representative voice to Local Government comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across Australia to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a say about Councils’ decisions that affect them and to guide Councils’ broader work relating to First Nations peoples, truth telling, sovereignty, treaty-making and addressing systemic racism.

OBJECTIVE

Australia can be described as a vibrant and multicultural nation, being home to the world’s cultures and inhabitants who can identify with more than 270 ancestries. From the year 1945, the number of people who have migrated to Australia from different parts of the globe are approximately seven million. The country considers the rich cultural diversity as its main strength which embodies its national identity.

As a peak body ALGA needs to demonstrate its commitment to empowering people from culturally diverse backgrounds to give voice to multicultural Australia in the work that it does. The ALGA discussion paper identifies the importance of community resilience as key to the capacity of communities to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations including natural disasters, persistent drought, pandemics, fluctuations in global trade, recession, and a rise in inequality. Ideally, we want all communities to not only survive but thrive.

ALGA’s role and responsibility as a representative body requires a commitment to giving voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by ensuring that ALGA policy, action and support are informed by lived experience, insight and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

KEY ARGUMENTS

Local councils are best placed to understand the complexity and diversity of their communities. As the peak body representing local government in Australia, ALGA is well positioned to lead and
advocate on concerns relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and enhance local government’s capacity in leading stronger commitment to Traditional Land owners, truth telling and respectful engagement to inform decision making.

Many of Australia’s local government areas have large numbers of constituents who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. ALGA works closely with the Commonwealth to advance cultural diversity and represents local government concerns relating to citizenship, migration and settlement policy.

While in place at State levels, there is currently no advisory body to the ALGA on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This poses a risk to ensuring integrated planning and response to these national challenges.

The establishment of a National Advisory Body to the ALGA formed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would further enhance ALGA’s role in this space, informing direction and decisions, improving cultural awareness, the path to recognition and the path to self-determination. In turn this will enhance the stability and prosperity of communities across Australia.

40
East Arnhem Regional Council, NT

The National General Assembly (NGA) calls on the Federal, State and Territory Governments to commit to nationally consistent recognition of Indigenous Local Government Councils as an Aboriginal controlled entity across Australia at all levels of Government. Indigenous Local Government Council being a Local Government Council with a majority representation of both Elected Officials and Constituency of Indigenous Australians.

OBJECTIVE
The Closing the Gap agreement is a significant milestone in the recognition of the Local Government as a partner in the achievement of outcomes to address entrenched inequality faced by too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians.

Moving forward, it is important that the voices of Indigenous Councils and Elected Officials are heard loud and clear and that their knowledge and experiences underpin the development of effective policy and advocacy.

Policy formed under Closing the Gap can be enhanced by a diverse range of existing and emerging approaches to shared decision-making and self-determination across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities if they are consistent with the national policy and contribute to Closing the Gap at the local level. This recognises the importance of both national priorities for collective action and of enabling local communities to set their own priorities and tailor their services to their unique contexts.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The provision of appropriate municipal services and infrastructure in Indigenous communities is a joint responsibility between all levels of Government. ALGA is working to promote improved coordination and engagement with Local Government, particularly Indigenous Local Government Councils, to improve the delivery of all government services and infrastructure to Indigenous communities. Indigenous Local Government Councils are invariably constrained as they do not have access to resources, including own-source rate revenue, to provide services and infrastructure. Consequently, Indigenous Local Government Councils rely heavily on external funding and grants that are acutely vulnerable to policy changes and policy implementation.
The motion supports and strengthens ALGA’s Implementation plan in respect to Closing the Gap Agreement:

a) Ensure Local Governments understand the Agreement and its commitments and encourage its adoption by local governments.

b) Assist the state and territory governments to work with Local Governments in the implementation of the Agreement.

c) Support strengthened shared decision-making at the local level, supporting local governments to be part of the partnerships with Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Local Government Acts, current and emerging policy relating to Indigenous Australians provides limited or nil identification or recognition of Indigenous Local Government Councils. As an example, The Northern Territory Government, Local Decision-Making Policy disregards Indigenous Local Government Council as a contributor, creating serious implications for the Indigenous residents and the regions. The LDM Policy was developed in 2017-18 and predates the Closing the Gap Agreement making it appropriate for a review to ensure alignment. Additionally, any review of policy should recognise Indigenous Local Government Councils as Indigenous-controlled.

Actions stemmed from the loss of recognition of Indigenous Local Government Councils only furthers the gap.

41
Darwin City Council, NT

That this National General Assembly

a) Calls on Australian Local Government Association, as the lead member and advocacy body for Local Government in Australia to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan for the Australian Local Government Association.

b) Calls on the Australian Government to fund a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Safety Training Program for all Local Government Elected Members and Council Staff as an act of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.

OBJECTIVE
The national objective of Reconciliation Australia is to inspire and enable all Australians to contribute to the reconciliation of the nation.

Reconciliation Australia has put in place a framework for organisations to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan to identify and document organisations contribution to reconciliation locally and nationally.

The Reconciliation Action Plans are a tool that assists organisations to foster shared goals, purpose and language for reconciliation and enables organisations to celebrate and promote diversity within Australian workplaces.

ALGA is the peak national member and advocacy body for Local Government in Australia. Development a RAP for the peak member organisational demonstrates a commitment by local government nationally to achieve reconciliation.

Working towards reconciliation is founded on cultural respect and safety.

With one of the highest Aboriginal populations per capita in the County, City of Darwin has imbedded cultural respect and safety training as part of its ongoing organisational development and commitment to reconciliation.
City of Darwin is of the view that this training is essential to reconciliation and as the closest level of government to the people, are strong supporters of cultural respect and safety training for all local government elected members and staff nationally.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

Reconciliation Australia’s (RA) website shows that only 47 of Australia’s 537 Local Governments have developed RAPs endorsed by RA. This is less than 9% of all Local Governments nationally.

None of the six state / territory local government member bodies who form part of ALGA, have formalised a RAP endorsed by RA.

Council’s RAP underpins internal business plans and provides a framework to support reconciliation through clear actions and deliverables.

Council recommends that ALGA develop a RAP to elevate and lead the importance of reconciliation to local governments at a national level.

City of Darwin’s commitment, through our RAP, is to invest in building the cultural competency skills of the organisation with the delivery of a Cultural Respect and Safety training program.

Training assists Elected Members and Council Staff to understand the behaviour and beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture and show respect and facilitate safety for everyone.

ALGA is requested to call on the Australian Government to fund a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Safety Training Program for all Elected Members and Council Staff as an act of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.

---

**42**

Newcastle City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Commonwealth Government to:

1. **Endorse** the ‘Racism Not Welcome’ campaign, headed up by former Socceroos Captain, SBS commentator and human rights campaigner, Craig Foster, at the national level, as a symbol of Australia’s commitment to multiculturalism, inclusivity, and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

2. **Partner** with peak national bodies, including the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia, the Refugee Council of Australia, and the Inner West Multicultural Network, to implement the ‘Racism Not Welcome’ campaign on a national level.

**OBJECTIVE**

A number of local Councils in New South Wales, including City of Sydney, City of Newcastle and Inner West Council, have formally endorsed the ‘Racism Not Welcome’ campaign, to promote inclusivity, cultural diversity and tolerance throughout their Local Government Areas.

Developed by the Inner West Multicultural Network, the community campaign has seen the roll out of ‘Racism Not Welcome’ street signs, and communication materials.

City of Sydney Councillor Linda Scott, and President of the Australian Local Government Association, is hopeful it will become a national trend.

“I’m so proud to stand beside Craig Foster AM and our City’s multicultural communities to launch the #RacismNOTWelcome campaign,” she said.
“I’m confident local governments across the nation, as the closest level of government to our communities, will continue the good work we do to ensure all people feel a sense of belonging and are equal.

Foster said he agreed to front the campaign last year as stories of racism began to pile up at the Addison Road Community Centre, where he volunteers, and described the street signs initiative as a public demonstration of how the issue should no longer be hidden or taboo but visibly acknowledged.

KEY ARGUMENT:
The ‘Racism Not Welcome’ campaign has emerged as a response to a reported increase in racist attacks on people in our communities.
The Inner West Multicultural Network wanted to do more in the fight against racism to make sure that the Inner West was a safe a welcoming space for all, but also to inspire the other 537 Local Government Areas in Australia to do the same.
The Federal Government could provide national support for the ‘Racism Not Welcome’ campaign, particularly as a communication tool to promote the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to help promote multiculturalism, diversity, inclusivity and tolerance.

The National General Assembly calls on all Councils:

1. To note that the #RacismNotWelcome campaign was created by the Inner West Multicultural Network (IWMN) as a grassroots anti-racism campaign for local Councils and communities to create safe places;
2. To endorse the #RacismNotWelcome campaign; and
3. To write to the Prime Minister and relevant Minister/s to:
   a. Express grave concern at the rise of racism in Australia;
   b. Request funding be made available to Councils to support the rollout of the #RacismNotWelcome campaign.

OBJECTIVE
Racism and its eradication is everyone’s business and is of National significance. Governments at all levels play a fundamental role in the prevention and response to systemic and rising racism. Racism in any form should not be tolerated as it is a basic human right for people to feel safe, equal and included in decision-making.

A few examples of key reasons why this motion should be declared at the NGA include:
The COVID pandemic has exposed increased racism against people of Asian descent in Australia, which has been documented in a number of studies. A number of Asian-Australian Councillors have also reported receiving race hate letters.
The Black Lives Matter movement has also highlighted the ongoing racism and injustices our First Nations peoples continue to experience.
Chin Tan, the Race Discrimination Commissioner, has recently announced the development of a National anti-racism framework by the Human Rights Commission.
This Motion would further exemplify the conference theme of “Working Together for our Communities”. Many Councils have a long history of standing against all forms of racism, and this motion strengthens Local Government’s commitment and leadership in this area.
KEY ARGUMENTS
The Inner West Multicultural Network (IWMN) is an independent network of government and non-government service providers and organisations that works with, advocates for and supports people from multicultural communities in the Inner West LGA.

The IWMN developed the #RacismNotWelcome campaign as a response to an increase in racist attacks on people in our communities. There is research-based evidence for the rise in racism, including reports published by UTS and UNSW [1], and Per Capita and the Asian-Australian Alliance [2].

The campaign is a community-led, grassroots initiative intended to acknowledge the existence of racism, validate people’s lived experiences with racism and normalise conversations about racism whilst igniting change.

The aim of the campaign is to create:
1. A place where racism is not welcome and a place with strong social cohesion where racism is ‘called out’
2. A place where people feel a sense of belonging and are equal
3. A place where decision making is shared, and diversity is valued and celebrated
4. Through the street sign element of the campaign: a call to action for other Councils, and to encourage the local community to have these important if difficult conversations and call out racism when they see it

Since Inner West Council endorsed the campaign and put up 40 street signs in the LGA, City of Sydney, Waverley, City of Ryde and City of Newcastle Councils have also moved motions to support.

There has also been a lot of interest from Councils from around the country as well as media attention, which shows the need for a campaign against racism.

Isaac Regional Council, QLD

That this National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to urgently conduct an Inquiry and engage rural communities to assess the effectiveness of the 2019 Stronger Rural Health Strategy, and in particular, to identify any anomalies in the strategy that are symptomatic of the diversity of rural Australia and its health.

OBJECTIVE
The Australian Government implemented the “Stronger Rural Health Strategy” in 2019. The objective of the motion is for an Inquiry that will engage with rural and remote communities to examine the Stronger Rural Health Strategy and correlate current experiences of rural and remote communities with accessing medical, nursing and allied health services in region.

The aim of the Stronger Rural Health Strategy is to build a sustainable, high quality health workforce that is distributed across the country according to rural and remote community need.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report published October 2019 determined:

- On average, Australians living in rural and remote areas have shorter lives, higher levels of disease and injury and poorer access to and use of health services.
- They have higher rates of potentially preventable hospitalisations with very remote areas 2.5 times as high as major cities; and
- Need to travel long distances or relocate to attend health services or receive specialised treatment.
Despite the range of worthy initiatives in the Strategy, anecdotal evidence is that the Strategy is not cutting through. The model for allocation of medical professionals to rural and remote communities is inadequate.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, October 2019 report, identifies that the health workforce is measured by the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) health professionals in an area divided by the estimated resident population of the area. Australians living in Remote and Very remote areas experience health workforce shortages, despite having a greater need for medical services and practitioners and a broader scope of practice, Australian Medical Association (2017).

The AIHW Report draws on an ABS Survey of Health Care (2016) which identified that Australian’s living in regional, remote and very remote areas, reported that not having a GP nearby was a barrier to seeing one, 2.5 times as high for outer regional areas and 6 times as high for remote and very remote areas.

The statistics for the proportion of people not having a specialist nearby as a barrier to seeing one increased from 6% in major cities to 22% in inner regional areas to 30% in outer regional areas and 58% in remote and very remote areas.

Anecdotal evidence in the Isaac region can be seen in new parents having to travel away from their communities to give birth, patients having to travel for a life-saving diagnosis often followed by relocation for ongoing life-saving treatments. Further, when critical medical services are needed in region for emergency industry response, the service capacity is not available.

There are critical shortages of medical, nursing and allied health staff across Isaac region. These critical shortages present an unacceptable risk to Isaac communities.

The AIHW report, inclusive of the ABS Survey of Health Care, identifies that this issue is echoed throughout regional communities across Australia and is intensified by remoteness.

Australians living in rural and remote Australia deserve an equitable model of health care fit for purpose.

---

45

Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to investigate and explore a partnership between local government and Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation to ensure young people in rural, remote, isolated and public transport-deprived areas gain access to appropriate and relevant youth mental health services.

**OBJECTIVE**

The increasing problem of youth mental health is an important issue confronting the nation, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Headspace research:

- Mental health is the number one issue of concern for young people in Australia
- 34 per cent of young Australians in 2020 reported high to very high levels of psychological distress – more than triple the rate in 2007 (9 per cent)
- Mental illness risk is even greater in priority groups
- Rates of coping have dropped significantly during COVID-19 for key groups including 72 to 63 per cent for those aged 12-14. [1]
- People in rural and remote areas face additional challenges, including:
- Poorer access to specialised care (9 out of 10 psychiatrists are employed in major cities)
- Fear of stigma, particularly in smaller communities
• Lower incomes
• Limited or non-existent public transport.

The rate of suicide outside major cities is 66 per cent higher than within them.

2. National Rural Health Alliance Inc (2014). Mental Health & Suicide in rural & remote Australia

KEY ARGUMENTS

Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health initiative. It offers a welcoming and engaging approach to respond to the mental health needs of young people and operates at a local/regional level. While more than 50 per cent of Headspace centres now operate in rural and regional areas, young people who do not have easy access to a centre are not accessing the services provided by Headspace. Despite 100,000 young people accessing Headspace centres in 2018-2019, just 32,000 young people accessed online and phone counselling, and even fewer young people used other services such as Headspace Early Psychosis and Headspace Work and Study.

Local government has the capacity to assist young people access help by promoting Headspace to both parents and young people, as well as through schools. This is vital to ensure that young people are able to access the services and support they need in dealing with their mental health issues.

Formalising a national partnership with Headspace will mean young people in rural, remote, and isolated areas all over the country will receive improved access to vital mental health services. Having this partnership operate on a local level will allow local government to work with their local Headspace centre to find access solutions that work best for their communities.

46
Glen Innes Severn Council, NSW

The National General Assembly (NGA) calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Formulate a Liveability Plan for Regional Australia and to take immediate action to manage and ultimately eliminate the Mental Health issues currently affecting young people living in Regional Australia.
2. Make a lasting and meaningful commitment to provide sustained financial support to proven intervention services or directly to Councils to assist in local programs or engage external services such as Youth In-search.

The Liveability Plan should urgently address the following significant issues, which are being felt so extensively throughout Regional Australia:

• Healthcare;
• Mental Health;
• Connectivity;
• Housing Availability;
• Traineeships and Apprenticeships for youth.
• The expansion and assistance with Renewable Energy projects, which will inject significant employment into Regional Australia.

OBJECTIVE

This relates to every state in Australia.
The Australian Local Government Association is Local Government’s peak body and should advocate any major issues on behalf of Local Government. The issues raised in this motion are most definitely significant national issues.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Young people living in Regional Australia are significantly impacted by problems associated with remoteness, dysfunctional and broken homes, domestic violence, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, unemployment and homelessness.

These experiences can lead them to drug and alcohol abuse, crime, self-harm and unfortunately suicide.

It is possible to achieve significant positive outcomes for these at-risk young people by committing to the long-term delivery of targeted professional intervention programs that address the underlying trauma for the young person.

While also working with the young person to rebuild their resilience, self-esteem and assist them becoming a positive contributing citizen in the community.

There are significant benefits to communities with the improved mental health of the young person. Reducing their reliance on the healthcare system, their increased self-esteem and resilience which in turn reduces the propensity for crime, therefore reducing impacts for law enforcement and the numbers of young people in jails. These benefits will create safer communities in Regional Australia.

Given the catastrophic events occurring more frequently and the scientific research that demonstrates that our climate is changing and the need to reduce emissions, the expansion of Renewable Energy projects will inject much needed funding and significant employment opportunities into Regional Australia.

---

Blacktown City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to ensure that:

1. local government receives an appropriate and equitable share of Federal arts and cultural funding
2. local councils are recognised as arts organisations and made eligible to apply for all funding opportunities.

To support this campaign, the National General urges councils across Australia to adapt the ALGA arts and culture position statement and assist with joint advocacy.

OBJECTIVE
Community resilience. Arts and cultural development are a critical element of a vibrant and resilient community.

In addition to physical infrastructure, social infrastructure is also vital for resilience. Social infrastructure is broader than just buildings, it includes the individuals and groups, places, and institutions, including councils, that foster community cohesion and social support. Communities and individuals with good social networks and connections demonstrate greater resilience.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Arts and cultural activities are key drivers for local economies and contribute to community mental health and social cohesion.

Prior to the impacts of COVID, the report The Big Picture* identified cultural expenditure is spilt more evenly between the levels of government than it was a decade ago. Overall, the Australian
Government has reduced its contribution, while state and local government have increased their contribution to the provision of cultural infrastructure and programming.

The impacts of COVID has seen many local governments considered ineligible for Federal funding and economic stimulus opportunities directly impacting and reducing the provision of services to local communities and local economies. Many local governments are contributing well in excess of 30% for the provision of arts and culture.

*The Big Picture: Public Expenditure on Artistic, Cultural and Creative Activity in Australia (2020)*

48
Penrith City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to continue to invest in arts and culture stimulus programs (including capital investments) to ensure this sector of the economy can rebuild and that investments reach local communities.

OBJECTIVE
The arts and creative industries are fundamental to Australia’s identity as a society and nation, and increasingly to our success as a national economy.

The last decade has seen a greater concentration of different policy drivers in a range of policy settings across all three levels of government, and this has made arts and culture an increasingly complex area of public policy.

The arts and culture economy has been badly impacted by COVID both in urban and regional settings. While we acknowledge the $250 million investment by the Commonwealth in response to COVID, this level of funding commitment needs to be maintained, and applied at a local level to ensure that arts and culture truly reflects the communities that it engages, and that local employment opportunities are leveraged effectively.

It has been shown that an early start and maintenance of stimulus packages can boost confidence, counteract the contractionary pressures in the economy through direct and spill over effects, and create much needed jobs. This is particularly seen with investments in national tourism, particularly where they have reached local communities.

KEY ARGUMENTS
A funding stimulus approach should continue to be applied to Arts and Culture at a national level in response to COVID-19.

A funding program aimed at both infrastructure and creative industries will demonstrate how arts, culture and creative activities interact with each other to increase creativity and innovation across the economy.

Many substantial arts and cultural facilities are owned or operated by local government. As such, increased funding would allow councils to deliver more in the arts sector, noting the vital role a thriving arts and cultural sector plays in social cohesion, innovation, economic growth and urban renewal.

Arts and culture activities help promote community engagement, social cohesion and wellbeing. More funding will help provide arts infrastructure and opportunities close to people's homes.

Substantial population growth, particularly in emerging areas across Australia represent opportunities where arts and culture sector investment will create economic vitality.

For example, Western Sydney represents 1 in 10 Australians yet attracts only 1% of Commonwealth arts program funding, and 5.5 % of the States Cultural Arts, heritage and events funding.
Despite these inequities, the region has grown its own unique mass of Cultural Arts activity around its venues, events and organisations that provide an exceptional Cultural Arts offer. However, given the impacts of COVID, continued stimulus is necessary.

48.1
Maribyrnong City Council, VIC

That this National General Assembly call on the State Government/Federal Government to sponsor, promote and support visual and public art projects in local government areas, across Australia, through a public funding or grants opportunity that highlight the impacts and challenges of climate change as it is now effecting communities at a local level.

OBJECTIVE
Thought must be given to any ways of communicating and expressing the devastating impacts climate change has had, particularly on Australia’s more rural local government areas. The Federal Government must harness these efforts to combat and recognise climate change by committing to this national framework.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The recent bushfires have demonstrated the realities of impending local impacts of climate change on our urban and natural environments. 41 local councils across Australia, including the City of Maribyrnong, have recognised the climate emergency and urgently called for action.
Local Government also has a strong commitment to public art as an important part of local expression and an opportunity to share diverse perspectives on social and environmental issues that matter.

The purpose of the public art projects is to highlight the impact of climate change on people in urban and regional areas, through the devastating bushfires and other evident weather events.

The projects may consider impacts such as the devastating impacts that the recent bushfires have had on the natural environment including plants, animals and insects.

49
Broken Hill City Council, NSW

That the Federal Government provides funding for the development of state and territory wide Museum Strategies and provide sufficient resources to ensure cultural heritage led vibrancy, collection care and local storytelling initiatives are supported, developed and maintained for communities throughout the nation.

OBJECTIVE
The preservation and promotion of Australia’s history should be a national project supported by all levels of government, to gain a better understanding of our national story, development of a greater sense of pride of place for Australians, both at a local and national level and promotion of the study of history at school and university level. This will encourage increased Museum visitation and preservation of history at a local level.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Museums are important to communities throughout the State as they act as a community keeping place for local memory and storytelling. They also provide welcoming places for locals and tourists alike. A NSW Government-led Museum Strategy is essential to guide the prioritisation of infrastructure developments, projects and resources to make museums sustainable (keep the doors open), providing vibrant programming - ensuring that local stories are documented and made accessible both in museums and in on-line forms.
This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to improve the welfare of migrants and resolve the labour shortages affecting businesses and industries in rural and regional Australia by:

1. Revising the visa regime to grant work rights to all bridging visa holders
2. Granting amnesty to undocumented workers, specifically undocumented farm workers.

OBJECTIVE
A revision of the visa regime to grant work rights to bridging visa holders would enable willing migrant workers to take up employment opportunities. This would benefit both the migrants themselves and the communities in which they reside. In most cases these migrant workers would fill labour shortages that would otherwise not be filled.

An amnesty or “status resolution” for undocumented farm workers that would see them transition to a one or two-year visa would improve welfare outcomes for these workers, reduce the likelihood of them being exploited by unscrupulous labour hire companies, and support businesses and industry by providing them with a more stable and secure workforce.

KEY ARGUMENTS
- Bridging visas are transitory visas which permit immigrants to remain in Australia for a certain period of time. They are generally granted to allow time for new visa applications to be processed after previous visas have expired.
- According to the Department of Home Affairs, there were 336,453 people on bridging visas in Australia on 31 December 2020 and the number is growing.
- There are six classes of bridging visa which have different permissions with regards to travel, work and study. Some visas do not grant work rights.
- It is estimated that in some local government areas around 20% of temporary migrants are on bridging visas, seldom with attendant work rights. It is a situation that frustrates local recruitment drives, with ready and willing job seekers unable to take up employment due to work right restrictions.
- Australia is facing labour shortages and is highly reliant on transient seasonal workers. Attracting domestic workers to seasonal work is difficult.
- A shortage of overseas workers, induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, is presenting a major challenge for farmers and horticulturists during harvest times.
- It is estimated that there are 100,000 undocumented workers in Australia. About two-thirds (75,000) of them work in agriculture.
- Undocumented workers are people who don’t have a visa, have the wrong kind of visa (including bridging visas), or whose visas have expired.
- According to Dr Joanna Howe, a senior lecturer of law at the University of Adelaide, undocumented workers are susceptible to exploitation, including underpayment, by unscrupulous labour hire companies. The National Agricultural Labour Advisory Committee also indicated that undocumented workers are at highest risk of exploitation.
- Recommendation 25 of the National Agricultural Labour Advisory Committee’s National Agricultural Workforce Strategy: Learning to excel, which was released in December 2020 is that the Australian Government allow a one-off regularisation of undocumented AgriFood workers.
50.1
Leeton Shire Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to modify the implementation of the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) to improve welfare outcomes for workers.

OBJECTIVE
To improve the welfare outcomes of workers involved in the SWP, strengthen Australia’s standing across the Pacific region and build trust between nations, it is recommended that the SWP and relevant Councils sign a Memorandum of Understanding formalising:

1. A close working relationship between Councils, regional SWP Coordinators, and SWP dedicated Welfare and Wellbeing Support Persons
2. SWP notification to Councils of the movement of SWP workers between Local Government Areas
3. Council officer attendance at arrival and departure briefings
4. Improved implementation of the SWP Assurance Framework characteristics: Prevention, Deterrence, Detection and Correction
5. The involvement of Councils in monitoring the welfare of workers involved in the SWP, specifically in relation to the provision of suitable housing
6. The preparation of an SWP stakeholder communication plan aimed at delivering regular relevant communication to stakeholders.

KEY ARGUMENTS
• The Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), which commenced on 1 July 2012, is a Federal Government-initiated effort to improve economic opportunities for nationals of participating countries, while providing seasonal labour to Australia’s agriculture and accommodation sectors.
• Primarily run by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), the SWP is a wholly managed government programme. The SWP enables employers in the agriculture and accommodation sectors to cover vacancies unmet by Australian labour for periods of up to 9 months.
• Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Tuvalu and Timor-Leste comprise the SWP participating countries.
• The SWP Portability Pilot allows approved employers operating in the Wimmera Mallee (Victoria), Sunraysia (Victoria/NSW), Goulburn/Murray (Victoria) and Riverina (NSW) regions can share workers. Under this pilot, employers have greater flexibility to move seasonal workers between farm placements during their visa period, without prior approval by the department. The timeframe for this pilot has recently been extended and may, at some point, be expanded.
• SWP workers are reported to have been living in cramped quarters, despite paying very high rents. ABC reporter Norman Herman told a story of nine workers paying a weekly rent of $1,350 to share a four-bedroom house.
• The Fair Work Ombudsman discovered a farm that was incorrectly compensating workers.
• Councils have an obligation to be connected to the programme through the appointed regional SWP Coordinator. However, Councils are not being informed about worker arrivals and departures. This means they are unable to monitor the living conditions and welfare of workers residing in their local government areas.
Tweed Shire Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to provide a significant and transformational funding stream for regenerative landscape management as an economic stimulus and job creator, that is easily accessible for rural landholders (including consideration of US and EU models of farm payments) to maintain and restore rural lands and provide the large scale change that is required to mitigate the increasing natural disasters that Australia is experiencing with Climate Change.

OBJECTIVE
Economic Stimulus for Regenerative Landscape Management

KEY ARGUMENTS

Regenerative Landscape Management has the potential to create thousands of jobs, mitigate the impact of natural disasters, enhance town water supply, assist farmers, capture carbon, and transform Australia’s degraded landscapes.

Australia is in dire need of transformational change to address these issues. Landholders are keen to make changes, but they need significant financial and technical support to implement these practices.

This COVID-19 crisis is an opportune time to kick start Australia on a path to building back better, reconnecting our communities to the land and keeping our communities safe.

Young people are keen to assist with this change but at the moment there are few job opportunities or career prospects in this area. Until research and investment in this space is activated these opportunities will not be realised. The Australian landscape is important for our national psyche and sense of wellbeing. Regenerative Landscape Management is a way to reinvigorate that pride and be a transformative change that will secure Australia’s future into the 21st Century.

Yarra City Council, VIC

That this Assembly resolves that:

a) the Federal Government’s revised rate of the Jobseeker payment of $44 per day is considered inadequate and will result in millions of Australian citizens being unnecessarily trapped in poverty as after 25 years with no increase to the incomes of unemployed Australians an increase of just $3.57 per day above the previous rate of the Newstart payment is insufficient;

b) it supports the demands from the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) “Raise the Rate for Good” campaign for:

   I. an increase to the base rate of JobSeeker Payment by at least $25 a day, and ensure everyone receives at least $65 a day;

   II. ongoing indexation of payments in line with wage movements at least twice per year; and

   III. establishment of a Social Security Commission to advise the Parliament on the ongoing adequacy of income support payments; and


c) member Councils be encouraged to register as Organisational Supporters of the ACOSS “Raise the Rate for Good” campaign

OBJECTIVE
The Federal Government has recently announced that the rate of payment to unemployed Australians will be reduced from the current rate of Jobseeker and that the increase from the previous level of Newstart will be $25 per week. This equates to an increase in income of approximately $3.50 a day for Australians without work, coming after a quarter of a century with no increase in real terms to the rate of payment.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

This decision by the Government will have drastic consequences for the rate of poverty across Australia. In local communities, including those in regional, suburban, and inner metropolitan areas, there will be human consequence from the Government’s decision. There will certainly be increased rates of child poverty and hunger, as well as many hundreds and thousands of families going without basic necessities due to the inadequate rate of income for unemployed citizens.

52.1

Newcastle City Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to:

1. Note that the severe economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been cushioned by Commonwealth, State and Local policy interventions, including the JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments;
2. Notes that prior to the $550 per fortnight increase in the JobSeeker payment in April 2020, the JobSeeker / NewStart rate had not been increased in real terms in 26 years.
3. Notes that in February 2021, the Commonwealth increased the JobSeeker rate by just $50 a fortnight, to $307 per week for a single adult, still well below the poverty line in Australia, and also coinciding with the end of the $75 per week coronavirus supplement, which will leave recipients $50 a week worse off than they currently are; and
4. Calls on the Prime Minister, Treasurer and Commonwealth Parliament to permanently raise the rate of JobSeeker by between $185 per week and $275 per week.

**OBJECTIVE**

The National General Assembly acknowledges the recent increase to the JobSeeker payment of $25 per week, noting that the Coronavirus supplement of $75 a week will end on 31 March 2021, leaving unemployed Australians $50 a week worse off than they currently are.

The Commonwealth Government should further increase financial assistance to ensure the dignity and wellbeing of unemployed people, and to provide an economic boost for Australian businesses.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

A wide cross section of Australian civil society has previously called on the Commonwealth to permanently Raise the Rate to provide dignity and wellbeing to unemployed Australians, as well as an economic boost for businesses, including:

- Australia’s chief banker, RBA Governor Philip Lowe
- The Business Council of Australia, who have said that the low JobSeeker rate: “erodes the capacity of people to present themselves well or maintain their readiness for work”
- The Australian Council of Social Services
- The Grattan Institute
- The Sydney Morning Herald Editorial Board
• Respected economists, including Professor Jeff Borland, who found that the JobSeeker supplement had: “not made it harder to fill jobs, nor has it slowed the rate of people obtaining employment”
• The Reference Group on Welfare Reform to the Minister for Social Services

52.2
Inner West Council, NSW

I. The Federal Government’s revised rate of the jobseeker payment, of $44.00 per day is inadequate and will result in millions of Australian citizens being unnecessarily trapped in poverty. After 25 years with no increase to the incomes of unemployed Australians an increase of just $3.57 per day above the previous rate of the Newstart payment is insufficient; and

II. Council write to all Mayors and Councillors throughout Australia requesting that their Councils adopt this resolution and request that it be tabled at the National Assembly of Local Government.

OBJECTIVE
i. The Federal Government’s revised rate of the jobseeker payment, of $44.00 per day is inadequate and will result in millions of Australian citizens being unnecessarily trapped in poverty. After 25 years with no increase to the incomes of unemployed Australians an increase of just $3.57 per day above the previous rate of the Newstart payment is insufficient; and

ii. Council write to all Mayors and Councillors throughout Australia requesting that their Councils adopt this resolution and request that it be tabled at the National Assembly of Local Government.

KEY ARGUMENTS
i. The Federal Government’s revised rate of the JobSeeker payment, of $44.00 per day is inadequate and will result in millions of Australian citizens being unnecessarily trapped in poverty. After 25 years with no increase to the incomes of unemployed Australians an increase of just $3.57 per day above the previous rate of the Newstart payment is insufficient; and

ii. Council write to all Mayors and Councillors throughout Australia requesting that their Councils adopt this resolution and request that it be tabled at the National Assembly of Local Government.

52.3
Broken Hill Council, NSW and Coonamble Shire, NSW

That the Federal Government’s revised rate of Jobseeker payment of $44.00 per day is inadequate and will result in millions of Australian citizens being unnecessarily trapped in poverty. After 25 years with no increase to the incomes of unemployed Australians an increase of just $3.57 per day above the previous rate of the Newstart payment is insufficient.

OBJECTIVE
Unemployed Australians require an adequate level of income to be able to buy the basic necessities and enjoy a decent quality of life. There will be increased rates of child poverty and hunger, as well as hundreds and thousands of families going without basic necessities due to the inadequate rate of income for unemployed citizens if the Government does not increase the unemployment payment to an adequate level.
KEY ARGUMENTS
The Federal Government has recently announced that the rate of payment to unemployed Australians will be reduced from the current rate of the Jobseeker Payment, and the increase from the previous level of Newstart Payment will be $25.00 per week. This equates to an increase in income of $3.57 per day for Australians without work, coming after a quarter of a century with no increase in real terms to the rate of payment.

This decision by the Government will have a drastic consequence for the rate of poverty across Australia, in regional, suburban, and metropolitan areas alike.

52.4
City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW

That this National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to implement a more substantial permanent increase to the rate of ‘JobSeeker’ that is above the poverty line and reflects the rising living costs for the 1.6 million Australians relying on unemployment payments to survive.

OBJECTIVE
Canterbury-Bankstown Council (Council) acknowledges ALGA’s continued campaign for adequate increases to welfare payments in line with rising living costs. Council also recognises efforts by the ALGA in highlighting Federal Government cost-shifting approaches that effectively place increased strain on local councils’ limited resources. It is undeniable that this national issue of poverty creates additional demands on the services that local governments provide.

The Federal Government’s financial measures and responses to COVID-19 have been critical in supporting vulnerable communities. At the height of the pandemic, the JobSeeker income support increased to $1,100 per fortnight through the Coronavirus Supplement. However, the Federal Government’s position to extend payments until March 2021 at a reduced rate of $715.70 for a single person left some individuals surviving on $51.20 a day.

The recent announcement by the Federal Government to increase the base rate of JobSeeker from $565.70 a fortnight to $620.80 in April 2021 – equating to an increase of approximately $4 a day, remains insufficient and substantially below the amount that ALGA, social service and welfare groups have proposed. This increase will mean that JobSeeker recipients will continue to receive less than half of the minimum wage (41.2% of that amount) and could push individuals further into poverty.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Australia’s unemployment payment prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was called Newstart Allowance. Equivalent to $40 a day ($280 per week), the rate had not increased in real terms since 1994 and existed well below the poverty line (estimated to be $550 per week). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Newstart Allowance was one of the lowest unemployment payments across 37 of the world’s leading economies.

In March 2020, a Coronavirus Supplement was introduced alongside JobSeeker allowing recipient access to $1,100 in support. In July, the Federal Government announced an extension to December 2020 at a reduced rate of $250, cutting payments to $815 a fortnight. Further developments led to an extension to March 2021, with a supplement of $150 and a total JobSeeker payment of $715.70.

In the period December 2019 to May 2020, the number of JobSeeker recipients doubled—from approximately 820,000 to 1,640,000. Within the industries that experienced the most rapid and severe declines in employment, women, young people and casuals were the most affected. Blaxland and Watson (within the Bankstown-Canterbury LGA) were within the top five electorates with the largest increase in JobSeeker recipients, rising 126% and 158% respectively.
At a rate of $40 a day for a single person pre-pandemic, the JobSeeker payment was already unsustainably low, resulting in recipients living well below the poverty line against rising living costs. Whilst the recent announcement reflects the first major increase since the 1980s, it is unreasonable for the Federal Government to propose that a $4 a day increase to the social security payment that more than 1.6 million Australians rely on is adequate to support the economic recovery of our people and nation.

53
Maribyrnong City Council, VIC

That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to fund a permanent and ongoing increase to the JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance to above the poverty line.

OBJECTIVE
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted so many lives across Australia, and continues to do so, and there will be a long recovery process before Australia gets anywhere near its previous economic and financial position. With jobs being lost due to the pandemic, the Federal Government needs to provide certainty and security for its citizens into the future.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The COVID Supplement brought the JobSeeker payment (formerly Newstart) above the poverty line for the first time in 27 years. This increase lifted thousands of people out of poverty, enabling them to keep a roof over their heads, eat well, and purchase essential mediation. Raising the rate of JobSeeker allows people receiving the payment to live with dignity while continuing to look for work.

54
Brimbank City Council, VIC

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to retain and expand the JobKeeper and JobSeeker Programs, to support ongoing response and recovery efforts to the COVID-19 Pandemic throughout local communities for at least the duration of 2021.

OBJECTIVE:
The themes and priorities contained in this motion are consistent with ALGA's "Stronger Community Resilience" Strategic Priority, which seeks to foster stronger community resilience that can respond to, withstand and recover from adverse situations.

The motion is also consistent with the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAVs) Strategic Priority around "Societal and Social Policy Changes", which seek to facilitate local governments to create and support cohesive communities with a fair and equitable access to universal community services. The JobKeeper and Jobseekers Programs are unprecedented national social welfare schemes that have been designed and administered by the Federal Government.

KEY ARGUMENTS
In response to the social distancing restrictions imposed across Australia in response to COVID-19, the Federal Government announced a number of welcome measures to support the Australian economy, businesses, workers and local communities.

Two key economic elements of the Federal Government’s COVID-19 Response included new "JobKeeper" and "JobSeeker" Schemes.

The "JobKeeper" payment was designed to keep people in jobs through the course of the coronavirus outbreak, and was particularly targeted to those sectors, businesses, workers and communities most impacted by social distancing restrictions, including the tourism, hospitality,
retail, arts and creative sectors. The "JobSeeker" Scheme was also introduced as an emergency six-month measure at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic by the Federal Government., providing up to $1,100 per fortnight to eligible job seekers, and effectively replaced the Newstart Allowance which paid recipients $550 per fortnight, or $40 per day. Rising economic consequences and unemployment throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic saw a significant take up of both the JobKeeper and JobSeeker Schemes. The pandemic has also had a disproportionate economic impact on young people, women and older people, some of whom will be affected for years or may never return to pre-pandemic employment conditions, unless adequate support is provided. Along with helping directly impacted workers, the JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments played a fundamental role in helping support local communities and local economies.

However, from September 2020, the Federal Government commenced a phased reduction across both payments, with JobKeeper due to be scrapped entirely from March 2021, and the JobSeeker payment planned to revert back to the original Newstart levels from March 2021. Maintaining such a timeline and approach to reduce these vital payments during the ongoing uncertainty associated with the evolving and ever changing COVID-19 Pandemic, may harm business and employment opportunities, as well as economic confidence throughout local communities across the country, at a very critical and fragile time.

54.1
Liverpool City Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly call for Job Keeper to be reinstated for the Visitation Sector of Hospitality until Airports and State borders are permanently open.

OBJECTIVE
If Australia wants a return to the pre COVID economic benefit that was once injected into the Australian and Local visitation economies, there needs to be ongoing support for this sector whilst the airports and State Borders remain randomly or permanently closed.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Hotels who have relied on the visitation economy have been seriously affected by COVID and the closure of National and International airports and state borders, with no opportunity for recovery until visitors are once again able to come and move freely in Australia.

55
Lockyer Valley Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide support for the concept of a universal entitlement to aged care that recognises the preference of many community members to stay in their own home and in their own regions. This support should ensure an equitable standard of aged care support across the nation.

OBJECTIVE
The Australian Government initiated the Royal Commission into Aged Care and Safety. This followed numerous and long held concerns relating to substandard care in aged care facilities and systemic problems in aged care. The Australian Government is the main funder of aged care and is the national regulator of aged care and is ultimately responsible for the system of aged care in Australia.

So, while clearly a national issue, the implications of this systemic failure are felt at a local and regional level. The Royal Commission into Aged Care and Safety has reported and noted the existing inconsistencies in the application of aged care across the nation. It is important that local governments advocate on behalf of their communities for equitable access to aged care.
KEY ARGUMENTS
The Royal Commission’s Final Report was tabled on 1 March 2021. Some relevant findings of the Commissioners are that:

- Significant problems exist with access to aged care;
- There is particular concern about access to aged care in regional rural and remote areas;
- Availability of aged care in regional rural and remote areas is poor and worsening;
- The costs of providing aged care are higher in the regions;
- Problems are exacerbated as older people make up a greater share of regional populations;
- Most people want to stay in their own homes and communities;
- There is limited access to allied services (already an issue in regions);
- Substandard care is evident and has been experienced by up to one third of clients;
- Cases of abuse are not uncommon;
- The system is understaffed, and workers are underpaid and under trained; and
- Government services are overly centralised.

A key Commission recommendation is that revised legislation should provide a system of aged care based on a universal right to high quality, safe and timely support and care to:

I. assist older people to live an active, self-determined and meaningful life, and
II. ensure older people receive high quality care in a safe and caring environment.

Equitable access should be achieved through better planning, costing and funding, and more flexible, integrated service provision.

The Commission provided 148 recommendations many of which flow from this concept of a universal entitlement to aged care. Recognition that many people prefer to stay in their own homes and communities is also a key consideration. Underscoring the policy response is the principle that Australians deserve an equitable standard of aged care regardless of where they are located.

Local governments will need to be vigilant to ensure the Commission’s key recommendations are adopted and implemented across our regions.

56
Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to collaboratively develop relevant models of aged care for rural and remote areas.

OBJECTIVE
It is important for service providers to collaborate to innovatively develop models of care that will work in rural and remote areas and advocate on behalf of aged people to the Federal Government to consider these so that:

- Financial and efficient services can be provided to clients
- They receive equitable care and choices where possible
- The challenges they face are reduced, thereby relieving stress
- Transport issues are reduced
- Accessibility to specialists is increased

Based in the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia, different models of care will be required for the various geographical segments, a coordinated approach is required to change the current system that many appear to find inequitable.
KEY ARGUMENTS
Australia has an ageing population (15% in 2016 were 65 years or older) and by 2055 this proportion will increase to 22.9%. This presents many challenges. It increases demand for primary health, aged care services and long-term care, requires a larger and better-trained workforce, and intensifies the need for environments and infrastructure to be age-friendly. It also has implications for the nature and quality of services and will affect economic output and governments’ budget.

When it is time for someone to move into residential aged care, the Australian Government subsidises aged care homes, with people contributing to the cost of their care if they can afford to. Access to residential aged care in remote and very remote communities is extremely limited. Private providers are not found in locations that operate on marginally sustainable business models such as those facilities that operate in remote and very remote communities. The concept of consumer choice is thus more constrained as you progress into more remote locations, and data strongly suggest that as people in these communities age, they have to move to regional locations where they are able to access better health and aged care services. In doing so, these people are removed from family and familiar surrounding causing extreme stress.

56.1
Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to collaboratively develop a single independent Aged Care Assessment program with sufficient funding for rural and remote localities.

OBJECTIVE
As a nation we have a responsibility to provide care, dignity and respect for our elderly. In order to provide efficient, timely and professional service an independent Aged Care Assessment program be made available to aged care clients regardless of locality.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Tabled 1/3/2021) details 148 recommendations designed to improve the quality of life for our elderly and we must begin by creating a single independent assessment process (Recommendation 28) that ensures fast and efficient delivery of services.

KEY ARGUMENTS
It is projected that the number of Australians aged 85 years and over will increase from 515,700 in 2018-19 to more than 1.5 million by 2058. The current system is not a single service. The aged care system offers care under three main types of service:

- Commonwealth Home Support Programme
- Home Care Packages
- Residential Care

The system provides a range of programs and services. Individuals who require assistance must wait for an assessment to determine needs for the development of an assistance package. The wait time for the assessment processes, under the current system is unacceptable.

Private providers are not found in locations that operate on marginally sustainable business models such as those facilities that operate in remote and very remote communities.
Maribyrnong City Council, VIC

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to have the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratios Disclosure) Bill 2019 re-presented & brought into legislation.

OBJECTIVE
COVID-19 has brought to the forefront the issues surrounding aged care in Australia and Councils across Australia play an integral role in providing safe aged care services and facilities to its residents.

KEY ARGUMENTS
People now enter aged care facilities later in life with more complex needs, 53% of residents are now classified as high needs. Staffing numbers, mix of qualifications and culture are all important in determining quality of care. The aged care sector is not currently required to report these metrics.

The Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratios Disclosure) Bill 2019 was proposed to mandate the publication of staffing ratios in aged care residential facilities. The current government allowed the Bill to lapse in the House of Representatives, by failing to debate it; and then voted the Bill down in the Senate.

Local Governments are well positioned to engage locally on this issue, to tap “grass roots” opinion through any number of networks and coordinate a critical mass of views regarding the absence of transparent staff ratio reporting.

The new assessment process must be sufficiently funded and readily available for all elderly citizens. It is well documented that the health of the elderly can decline very quickly leaving them without essential support under the current system because of the wait time for service assistance.

City of Boroondara, VIC

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to maintain the current volunteer management activity (VMA) funding arrangements for all volunteer support agencies and to increase the allocation in the next Federal Budget, as volunteering is key to keeping people feeling connected and supplied with essential services and critical support, particularly vulnerable, isolated and disengaged residents, at a time of high unemployment.

OBJECTIVE
The Department of Social Services has announced a redesign of the Volunteer Management Activity program.

Funding has been directed from 52 volunteer support services to state and territory volunteering peak organisations, with a focus on delivering services online. An equitable funding model is yet to be determined, but many localised volunteer support services may not receive funding.

Funded volunteer support services, including dedicated volunteering functions in local government, require ongoing, sustainable operational funding to continue meeting the needs of volunteering-involving organisations, volunteers and prospective volunteers. This includes prospective volunteers who are socially isolated, disengaged or experience barriers to finding opportunities to volunteer.
KEY ARGUMENTS
The Australian Government’s investment in volunteer management must focus on delivering federally funded program that meets operational and resourcing needs of volunteer support services.

Volunteer support services maintain their current funding arrangements, so as not to disrupt the support offered to organisations and prospective volunteers who rely on localised support these services provide.

The program should not focus exclusively on delivery of services online, but:
• build capacity of volunteer-involving organisations, particularly ‘small’, ‘medium’ organisations that require dedicated, ongoing support due to resourcing requirements
• drive growth, sustainability, accessibility of local volunteer opportunities
• enhance opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to volunteer
• provide multiple pathways for prospective volunteers to find relevant, meaningful volunteering opportunities.

Support delivered should include:
• targeted freely available resources to support managers of volunteers increased opportunities for managers of volunteers to participate in volunteering forums, networks, training workshops
• resourcing to allow place-based support services to develop and deliver targeted initiatives, responsive to community trends
• promoting volunteerism in the community
• supporting individuals to find relevant, meaningful volunteer opportunities, particularly individuals who experience barriers independently searching for volunteer opportunities online (i.e. social isolation, access to technology, disability, cultural sensitivities).

Volunteer support services have been overwhelmed throughout COVID-19 pandemic, experiencing significant increased demand for volunteer placement while managing volunteer management support for small-medium sized organisations that temporarily suspend programs, operate at reduced capacity or upscale efforts to meet community demand.

Ceasing VMA funding during community recovery at a time of high unemployment will damage the crucial structures volunteer support services provide the community sector. Most material aid and social support services rely heavily on volunteers and demand for services will remain high.

Funding to volunteer support services must increase in the next Federal Budget to ensure volunteering remains an important pathway to employment, social connection, positive mental wellbeing and building community resilience.

58.1
Broken Hill Council, NSW

That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to provides support for the establishment of a Local Government Volunteer Strategy that can support requests for government funding assistance to regional and rural communities in their efforts to encourage greater volunteer labour participation through offsetting the costs incurred by local organisations who provide those volunteer services.

OBJECTIVE
Regional organisations across the country, particularly local government and health-related services, struggle to fill skilled professional positions. Volunteer organisations, though not able to fill these gaps, can still play a vital part in assisting with the health and welfare of local communities. There
has been much attention paid in the past few years to groups such as the SES and other emergency services, but other voluntary organisations play a very significant role for small and regional communities and the Federal government should have a greater role in ensuring the long-term survival of a healthy and evolving volunteer workforce.

Supporting volunteers by increasing capacity of council staff in NSW will value and recognise the contribution of volunteers across the NSW communities.

In every community there is an untapped reservoir of skills which with encouragement and direction can be harnessed to assist in the achievement of local goals. Many local volunteer organisations are limited in their capacity to deliver essential services to the community because of a lack of funds. Australia’s current volunteer workforce is aging rapidly, and new means must be found to attract new volunteers with skills and passion.

Australia needs to find new ways to attract skilled and dedicated volunteers to provide the services to make communities more liveable. Volunteer organisations, in part because of an aging volunteer workforce, can find it difficult to provide the resources to allow them to continue to operate. It is counter-productive for these organisations to spend all their time raising money simply to enable themselves to survive.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Developing a volunteer strategy provides a framework to build a strong and sustainable volunteering culture within local government bodies.

Through the development of a volunteer strategy, it will be more feasible to align the involvement of volunteers with the strategic direction of our councils. A volunteer strategy demonstrates to stakeholders that volunteers are valued through their contribution towards councils’ strategic objectives.

Additionally, a volunteer strategy can provide the means for council to respond to emerging trends in volunteerism, identify future opportunities, promote best practice and ensure volunteer programs are responsive to the needs of councils and its volunteers.

59
Liverpool City Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly call on the Federal Government for a national consultation process involving all levels of government, that will provide the opportunity to re-assess and implement new planning controls that will ensure the delivery of future Pandemic safe Housing and Development.

OBJECTIVE
It is now clear that the new norm will include the necessity to learn from the COVID Pandemic in ways that effect the type of housing and governing planning instruments including LEPs, SEPs and BASIXs so that future housing provisions address the need to provide more COVID safe appropriate housing.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Governments at all levels need to re-address the Development and Planning controls to develop and include possible Pandemic mitigation that will provide Pandemic safe developments and Housing for the future.

Social and Affordable Housing planning controls need to be re-assessed in particular where small living quarters are designed for sleeping only, with expectation that other daily requirements are met through the provision of shared quarters and amenities.
The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to invest in social and affordable housing, working in partnership with state, territory and local governments to meet local demand and deliver post-pandemic economic stimulus.

OBJECTIVE
The themes and priorities contained in this motion are consistent with ALGA’s Strategic Objective of supporting "Stronger Community Resilience". Housing affordability has been declining across Australia for many years. Rent and purchase costs in the private housing market have outstripped growth in wages and income support, leading to a housing affordability crisis.

At the same time, the supply of subsidised housing (in the form of social and affordable housing) has not kept pace with demand. Access to safe and secure housing is a fundamental human right and key determinant of community health and wellbeing. As the closest level of government to the community, Councils provide support and services to people living in insecure housing or overcrowded dwellings. Council staff witness firsthand the negative impact on individuals, families and children. The COVID-19 crisis is likely to create further housing insecurity in the short term, particularly as income supports are reduced and more people face the risk of unemployment.

National leadership is required to encourage all three levels of government to play a role in increasing supply of social and affordable housing in response to local need, population growth, and economic challenges. The COVID-19 crisis provides this opportunity to invest in long term housing security for vulnerable communities, whilst stimulating the economy.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Residential property prices have been increasing across Australia for many years. Recent data shows the Residential Property Price Index (for the eight capital cities) has doubled over the past 15 years.

At the same time, the proportion of social and affordable housing in Australia is relatively low, having fallen from 5.1 per cent in 2007-08 to 4.6 per cent in 2017-18. By contrast, social housing account for more than 15 per cent of total dwellings in several European countries, including Netherlands, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

There is significant unmet demand for social and affordable housing in Australia. It is estimated that around 727,300 additional social housing dwellings will be required over the next twenty years.

Investment in social and affordable housing is also an effective form of economic stimulus. Recent research has found that government investment in building 30,000 social housing dwellings would support up to 30,000 jobs, while the Victorian Government estimates that its $5 billion Big Housing Build program will generate around 40,000 jobs in the building industry over the next four years.

Previously, the Rudd Government’s Social Housing Initiative invested $5.2 billion over two years to build 19,500 new social housing units and refurbish another 80,000 following the Global Financial Crisis.

Through the COVID-19 crisis, the Federal Government has provided much-needed support for vulnerable communities and businesses. It now has an opportunity to continue this work by investing in social and affordable housing across Australia to provide more housing options for disadvantaged people, whilst stimulating economic, employment and skills growth during the construction phase of such a strategy.
The National General Assembly calls on The Australian Government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

OBJECTIVE

All national governments are invited to sign and ratify this crucial global agreement, which prohibits the use, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and lays the foundations for their total elimination. It has currently been signed by 80 nations and has 35 states parties.

The Treaty will become international law when the number of states parties reaches 50. This is anticipated to occur in 2020/21.

As at 2020, 26 Australian councils have endorsed the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons ‘Cities Appeal,’ and have called on the federal government to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay. Hundreds more cities in thirteen countries have endorsed the ICAN Cities Appeal - pledging their support for the Treaty and calling on their governments to join it.

KEY ARGUMENTS

Nuclear weapons pose an unacceptable threat to people everywhere. That is why the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted in July 2017 by 122 member states of the United Nations.

The TPNW is the first treaty to comprehensively outlaw nuclear weapons, setting out a pathway for their total elimination. Nuclear dangers are increasing worldwide, and with more than 13,500 nuclear weapons still inexistence the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons is a humanitarian imperative.

In addition to acting locally to encourage and support a safe, healthy and connected community; councils have a responsibility to consider the catastrophic, persistent effects of nuclear weapons on our health, societies and the environment.

As cities are the main targets of nuclear weapons, local government has a responsibility to act to protect citizens from the threat of nuclear conflict. Globally, cities and towns have long championed the promotion of peace, as evident in the widespread membership of the international Mayors for Peace network which has 7,863 member cities in 163 countries, including 90 Australian cities.

61.1
Yarra City Council, VIC

This National General Assembly moves that:

a) the 2017 United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the first treaty to comprehensively outlaw nuclear weapons and provide a pathway for their elimination. This Treaty entered into force on 22 January 2021. All national governments are invited to sign and ratify the treaty.

b) entry into force is an important milestone on the path to a nuclear weapon-free world. It makes concrete the standard that nuclear weapons are illegal and illegitimate for all states, and a permanent part of international law.

c) to commemorate this achievement of global diplomacy, this National General Assembly endorses the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons ‘Cities Appeal’, which can found at https://icanw.org.au/cities/
OBJECTIVE
To urge the Australian Government to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment.

We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force and became permanent international law on 22 January 2021.

This Treaty is now the global benchmark for nuclear disarmament policy, and we call on the Australian government to sign and ratify it without delay.

61.2
Byron Shire Council, NSW

That his national General Assembly of local Government (NGA):

Notes that:

1. the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force and became permanent international law on 22 January 2021;
   i. this Treaty is now the global benchmark for nuclear disarmament policy;
   ii. any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment, and that
   iii. our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat.

2. Encourages all member councils to take steps to ensure that funds administered by their councils are not invested in companies that produce nuclear weapons, and

3. Calls on the Australian government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons without delay.

OBJECTIVE
The United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons prohibits nations from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons – or allowing nuclear weapons to be stationed on their territory. Adopted at the United Nations in 2017, it also prohibits them from assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to engage in any of these activities.

Australia has not yet joined the Treaty. Now, just as in the 1980s, it is in the hands of everyday people to put the treaty in front of our decision-makers and officeholders, to indicate our support for Australia’s ratification.

Australia has joined the treaties prohibiting other inhumane and indiscriminate weapons including biological weapons, chemical weapons, landmines and cluster munitions. It is inevitable that we also join the nuclear weapon ban treaty.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The most powerful way to honour the victims and survivors of nuclear weapons is to progress the elimination of these abhorrent weapons. We must not tolerate their existence or accept security frameworks based on nuclear incineration. The mindset that bestows prestige on nuclear arms is immoral, illogical and illegitimate.
The COVID-19 pandemic continues to demonstrate the fragility of global public health systems and the power of cooperation among nations. Our world is not equipped for a single nuclear detonation, a catastrophe that can be avoided with diplomacy and negotiation.

61.3
Newcastle City Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly:

1. Notes that the 2017 United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the first treaty to comprehensively outlaw nuclear weapons and provide a pathway for their elimination. This Treaty entered into force on 22 January 2021 and all national governments have been invited to sign and ratify the treaty;

2. Notes that the Treaty entering into force is an important milestone on the path to a nuclear weapon-free world. It makes concrete the standard that nuclear weapons are illegal and illegitimate for all states, and a permanent part of international law; and

3. Welcomes the entry into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January 2021 and calls on the Commonwealth Government to sign and ratify the treaty.

OBJECTIVE
The National General Assembly remains deeply concerned about the grave threat that nuclear weapons pose to communities throughout the world.

We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat. Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment.

Therefore, we warmly welcome the entry into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January 2021, and we call on our national government to sign and ratify it without delay.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The ICAN Cities Appeal is a global call from cities and towns in support of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The NGA is deeply concerned about the grave threat that nuclear weapons pose to communities throughout the world.

We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat. Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment.

Therefore, we warmly welcome the entry into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January 2021, and we call on our national government to sign and ratify it without delay.
The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to take action to make local communities and workplaces safer and more inclusive for women, including by:

- fully responding to the 55 recommendations in the Australian Human Rights Commission’s Respect@Work report of the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces 2020
- lifting public funding for the prevention of gendered violence to world’s best practice
- working with State and Territory Governments to introduce legislation to promote gender equality and require

**OBJECTIVE**

Gender equity and the full and safe participation of women, as well as men, in all aspects of Australian society have been national objectives for decades. This is no more important than in political life including as elected representatives of the community.

Recent events have highlighted that while as a country we have made considerable progress on the gender equity issue, we still have a long way to go, especially in relation to gendered violence.

Councils play a key role in community safety and crime prevention, as organisers of public events, urban planners, environmental design experts, and through local liaison with NSW Police. This key role is dependent on support and leadership from State and Federal Governments.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

Tens of thousands of people gathered at 40 rallies across the nation on Monday 15 March 2020 to call for an end to gendered violence in the face of two separate alleged rape scandals plaguing the Australian Government.

The momentum behind these rallies is not surprising given the prevalence of gendered violence such as sexual harassment and abuse. A 2018 report from the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) found 85 per cent of Australian women 15 years and older had been sexually harassed at some point in their life. In 2020, the AHRC’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins, delivered the landmark report, Respect@Work, based on an investigation into sexual harassment in the workplace.

This motion asks the Australian Government to move quickly to respond to and implement the 55 recommendations made in the report, and to provide leadership for other levels of government in addressing this important issue.
Recommendation 2 recommends, in order to achieve the most appropriate response for regional investment, the Australian Government undertake a series of round table consultations with:

- Commonwealth departments and agencies;
- State and local governments;
- Regional associations; and
- Community organisations.

OBJECTIVE
The Economic References Committee draw reference to the many previous inquiries into Regional Australia. The Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation report tabled 28 June 2018 included a very extensive list of parliamentary inquiries and major research spanning 20 years. A further Select Committee of the House of Representatives – the Select Committee on Regional Australia is due to report 31 March 2021, making three Commonwealth parliamentary inquiries into regional Australia in three years.

Given the extensive research conducted into regional Australia, now is the time to take stock of the findings and advance a positive regional development program, as recommended by the Senate Economics References Committee. A program that builds on what has been learned through the many inquiries and the expertise of those who live in the regions.

Close analysis of the effectiveness of Regional Development Australia and The Office of Northern Australia will also be useful to determine if current Government approach to managing and developing regional Australia is optimal.

The focus of the recommendations of the Report provide an opportunity for collaborative partnerships between all levels of government and the regions and will contribute to community and council resilience for the regions.

SUMMARY OF KEY ARGUMENTS
The global pandemic has been one of the most significant events of the past 50 years. It has required a new way of thinking about economic, social and political issues.

There has been new thinking on working from home. New thinking on cities, as regional Australia has been the least affected by the pandemic, initial evidence has shown that the pandemic has inspired a reconsideration of city living and look to the regions. Regions are now more attractive with lower house prices, relaxed lifestyle, a safer environment regarding illness and health.

Combined with the changed government thinking on debt and deficits – being that in times of crisis borrowing to support the economy is appropriate, the pandemic has provided a catalyst for change.

The 2020-21 Commonwealth Budget featured significant funding for Australia’s infrastructure with a $7.5 billion investment in transport infrastructure around the country as part of the COVID-19 economic recovery plan. Now is the time to reconsider the approach to Australia’s regions.

The vast list of previous inquiries has repeatedly heard that for the regions to prosper and reduce inequality they need large and sustained investment in infrastructure, education and training and amenities and healthcare.

The Commonwealth Budget, 6 October 2020, earmarked $552.9 M over four years to support regional Australia to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and recent natural disasters, build resilience to future economic shocks and support long term economic growth. That is less than $140M a year.
Now is the time to make necessary investments in the regions to develop, stimulate and rebuild the Australian economy. The next decade presents a once in a century opportunity to make those investments and allow regional Australia to fulfil its potential.

64
Shoalhaven City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to undertake a nationwide educative project on cybersecurity, in particular to help protect vulnerable members of our community against online fraud.

OBJECTIVE
The objective is to consolidate the effective messages of the Australian Government’s 2020 Cyber Security Strategy with delivery of key messages at the local level, to better protect our communities in the digital age. This impacts upon all Councils in Australia.

KEY ARGUMENTS
These scams surrounding of the bushfire disaster are examples of the increasing cybersecurity risks facing our communities, many of whose familiarity with digital technologies has been recently driven by the social isolation caused by COVID-19. Small and medium businesses are also affected, with 62% reporting cyber security incidents, and acknowledging they need more education about keeping devices and systems updated and protected.[1]

The Australian Government’s cybersecurity initiatives including those outlined in the 2020 Cyber Security Strategy, are commended. The educative materials that are being available address the information needs of the businesses and residents who are exposed to these threats. To ensure the delivery of the key messages about how people and businesses can protect themselves, the Government is encouraged to support its initiatives by providing information resources and campaigns focused at the local level, to reach those whose access to official websites and news outlets may be limited.


65
Orange City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly recognises the significant value to Australian society of regional TV news bulletins; and calls on the Australian Government to review and implement changes to relevant legislation to ensure commercial regional broadcasters are required to produce significant local bulletins.

OBJECTIVE
Many regional areas throughout Australia still enjoy a half-hour Monday to Friday regional TV news bulletin, as a complement to national news coverage. Commercial broadcasting companies have found these bulletins to offer them a commercial competitive advantage in establishing an early evening audience.

These bulletins, which provide a valuable source of diversity in regional news coverage, are a significant underpinning to democracy. At their best, they demand accountability from representatives of all tiers of government, in a way that national news sources are unable to do.

They help to shape and support the communities in which they live.
They are under threat from the same changes that are threatening the viability of national news networks. The gradual decline in the number of regional TV newsrooms throughout Australia is a key problem for local government in their efforts to engage with their local communities.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

In recent years, when a regional TV operator, switched to a different national commercial network which doesn’t rate well as well in regional areas, one response has been to abolish its regional newsroom.

Regional TV license holders still hold a privileged position in a market, where the number of operators is limited by government regulation. That position comes with a responsibility to provide socially-valuable coverage which contributes to democracy and the media fabric of regional communities.

However, some haven’t taken that responsibility seriously and have chosen to produce token news efforts (presenter-only, commercial-length news updates) to meet requirements rather than significant bulletins.

The established long-term link between producing a regional half-hour bulletin and attracting early-evening ratings suggests it’s everyone’s interests to produce a local news bulletin. Metro communities who have never grown up with the possibility of seeing local news on their television, are unlikely to advocate for this option, but in country communities there is a significant groundswell of support to protect this coverage which has always been part of their lives.

The Australian Government should work with commercial operators and community stakeholders to reach a better and balanced way forward.

---

66
Shoalhaven City Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a formal transparent framework of contacts for Local Government to liaise effectively with Federal Government partners.

**Objective:**
This impacts upon all Councils in Australia.

**Key Arguments**
In the aftermath of the Black Summer bushfires, recovery efforts were sometimes hampered by the difficulties encountered while seeking information or assistance from some Government departments.

Federal Government could assist greatly by facilitating a network of identified roles across relevant departments whom councils could approach directly to expedite sharing of information and resources. A reliable network of individual decision makers able to connect people and resources would help the first responders in Local Government with recovery and reconstruction efforts for their communities. It will also lead to more affective addressing of local community issues as they arise without the burden of bureaucracy.

---

67
Broken Hill City Council, NSW

That the Federal Government provides funding to financially support local councils in the restoration and remediation of local cemeteries that have been severely damaged from climatic conditions and drought.
OBJECTIVE
Project Focus
- Maintain the intrinsic link between cultural heritage of cemeteries
- Manage historic cemeteries as heritage places
- Present and interpret significant cultural heritage places to park users and visitors

Benefits
All Local Government Communities would benefit from Federal Government funding to State Governments to provide financial support for the restoration and remediation of the graves and gravestone that would preserve the history of all local communities.

Advocacy Focus
Restoration and remediation of graves and gravestones at all local council cemeteries is a major concern to the local government areas that have suffered major damage due to the climatic conditions and drought

KEY ARGUMENTS
Broken Hill and surrounds were hit by a hailstorm in November 2016 which resulted in the New South Wales Government declaring the event ‘a natural disaster’. Thousands of roofs have been replaced under insurance warranty over the last two and a half years.

What was not taken into account at the time was the serious damage to graves and gravestones within the Broken Hill Cemetery - the final resting place of over 50,000 persons and one of the most significant historical sites in Broken Hill - Australia’s First Heritage Listed City and an important tourism destination.

Our waterways are running dry due to the impact the drought has caused and is creating havoc to the land.

Broken Hill Tidy Towns Group is still working at removing broken wreaths and ornaments that were destroyed during the storm, but the restoration of graves is financially beyond council and its workers/volunteers.

The cemetery is the final resting place to may significant history makers and legends that help form Broken Hill along with over 800 men that were killed on Broken Hill mines are remembered in this incredible cemetery.

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide grant funding to assist Councils deal with the costs incurred in correcting historical errors in mapping of actual roads so that ratepayers do not have to meet these costs.

OBJECTIVE
The motion goes to the objective of Council Resilience and specifically the question of: "Apart from Financial Assistance Grants, how can the Australian Government assist councils to become more financially sustainable and able to better meet the needs of their communities?"

KEY ARGUMENTS
The capacity of some rural based councils to correct historic errors of legal tenure of public roads remains unattainable due to lack of funding.

When Australian cadastral surveying first commenced most portions of land in a Parish had legal access provided usually in the form of what has become known as a ‘paper road’. A great many of
public roads were originally constructed to provide practical versus legal access. As land tenure slowly became more complex, with Native Title as one example, the need for correct alignment became more significant, and is continuing to do so. The sheer quantity of roads in many shires requiring legal adjustment is cost prohibitive.

69
Newcastle City Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Note that in some jurisdictions, Councillors, Mayors and Lord Mayors are not entitled to the Superannuation Guarantee Contribution, despite Councillors being paid the appropriate superannuation entitlements in other jurisdictions;

2. Note that this sets a poor community standard and sends the wrong message to the community, given that superannuation should be a universal system to support all workers in Australia; and

3. Rationalise the Superannuation system for elected representatives from the local government level and ensure that all Councillors across Australia receive the Superannuation Guarantee Contribution.

OBJECTIVE
The Superannuation Guarantee Contribution is a universal system, of world’s best practice when it comes to ensuring adequate support for all workers in retirement.

In 2017, the Australian Tax Office (ATO) released findings that there are at least 2.4 million (about 30 per cent) of workers in Australia who have been underpaid their superannuation entitlements. This is a concern, as the purpose of superannuation is to provide income in retirement to substitute or supplement the age pension.

If the NSW government continues to fail to ensure that mayors and councillors in NSW are paid the SG (currently at 9.5 per cent), what kind of a message is this sending employers that also fail to make the appropriate payments? Many mayors and councillors rely solely on the income they derive from their duties on local government. What kind of community standard is being set from the continued failure to make the appropriate payment of superannuation?

In Victoria and Queensland, mayors and councillors are paid the appropriate superannuation entitlements.

KEY ARGUMENTS
“Exclusion from superannuation unfair to state's councillors and mayors”

Opinion - Newcastle Herald

Cr Adam Shultz

13 December 2018

The Superannuation Guarantee (SG) contribution is compulsory for all employers in Australia. This applies to all employment in the private sector, not-for-profit or government related roles and all remunerated board roles where an individual earns more than $450 in a calendar month.

Despite this, in NSW, mayors and councillors that serve on local government are excluded by the operation of section 251 of the Local Government Act 1993, which provides that mayors and councillors fees ‘do not constitute salary for the purposes of any act’.

92
A collective of Labor, Liberal and Independent councillors co-authored a motion on Lake Macquarie City Council that has passed and will advocate for change. We believe that the current situation is discriminatory and out of step with community expectations.

The federal government takes the non-payment of superannuation very seriously, with the Treasury Laws Amendment (2018 Measures No 4) Bill 2018 recently passing the Senate. This bill will allow the ATO to instruct an employer to pay the SG amount and outstanding liabilities or face severe financial penalties and up to 12 months imprisonment, or both.

In Victoria and Queensland, mayors and councillors are paid the appropriate superannuation entitlements.

It is time to stop discriminating against mayors and councillors in NSW.

70
Litchfield Council, NT

The National Assembly calls on the Commonwealth Government to facilitate the harmonisation of Long Service Leave (LSL) laws in Australia which would provide all States and Territories with a consistent set of LSL laws. This regulatory inconsistency should be addressed through an intergovernmental agreement vis-a-vis Work Health and Safety laws, to enable governments from each State and Territory and the Commonwealth to formally commit to the harmonisation of LSL laws. The intention is to harmonise these laws (including the Regulations that underpin them) to deliver the same LSL entitlements to all Australians.

OBJECTIVE
The National Employment Standards contain Long Service Leave (LSL) as a minimum standard. However, the Fair Work Act 2009 leaves the matter of determining LSL up to the States and Territories where a Modern Award does not discuss LSL. Most Modern Awards do not contain LSL provisions. Therefore, the matter is left up to state legislation meaning that across different states and territories, different entitlements apply even within the same or substantially same occupation or industry. Therefore, it is irrelevant calling an entitlement a National Employment Standard where it is not employed evenly across Australia. What this implies is that the LSL entitlements as they stand are incomplete, and action is needed to standardise the system. This will eliminate uncertainties for individuals employed in the Local Government sector arising from regulatory inconsistencies among jurisdictions and facilitate the attraction and retention of talent in Local Government employment.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The principal aims of the harmonised Long Service Leave laws are to:

- Establish a uniform national Long Service Leave system to simplify the rules and implement consistency for individuals across State and Territory jurisdictions.
- To encourage continuity of service with local government, with entitlements and arrangements that encourage the development of skills in the sector.
- To facilitate flexibility of service across local government, with portability between local government employers in all jurisdictions in Australia.

To eliminate discrepancies between entitlements – which create challenges both for portability and for efficient administration of Long Service Leave entitlements.
Section B
Notice of a strategic motion for the ALGA Board: That motions 71-102 be endorsed as generally consistent with current ALGA policy approaches, and be pursued as the Board see fit.
71
Leeton Shire Council, NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to hold a referendum to amend the Constitution to recognise local government as an important, legitimate and essential element in Australia’s system of government.

OBJECTIVE
To ensure local government is recognised as an important, legitimate and essential element in Australia’s system of government and improve the capacity of local government to work with other levels of governments in support of our communities.

KEY ARGUMENTS
• Local government contributes significantly to the nation’s economic, social and environmental wellbeing.
• For Federal and Local Government to work effectively in partnership and for funding to flow efficiently between the Federal Government and local councils, local government must be recognised in the Constitution. This can only happen lawfully through amendment to section 96 of the Constitution.

Federal Governments must be able to directly fund local governments. The recent bushfire emergency demonstrated the frustrating and unnecessary delays and bureaucracy created through the requirement for Federal funding to be distributed via State Governments.

72
Mildura Rural City Council, VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to address the rural and metropolitan rates divide that results in an imbalance in the capacity of rural councils to service communities and rural ratepayers to service rates.

OBJECTIVE
This is a National issue because the ability to pay rates falls more acutely on Regional rural and remote Municipalities and there is an imbalance in the ability to pay rates in these areas. It should be debated so regional rural and remote communities can begin to discuss and engage with what the real cost of not having rate equity is across the country.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Rate equity is essential in rural regional and remote Australia. Balancing the differences in the physical size of LGAs, populations and rateable properties is central to creating a system which equitably divides the cost of living. The overwhelming value of rates paid at the municipal level is immeasurable but more needs to be done to alleviate the burden on Municipal Councils. For LGAs to collect 3 per cent of the country’s taxes while supplying over 23 per cent of the services proves the importance rate equalization.

73
Mitchell Shire Council, VIC

That the National General Assembly advocate to the Federal Government, and in particular the Minister for Local Government, for an increase in the Financial Assistance Grants to support local governments to deliver a range of services including roads maintenance.
OBJECTIVE
For the Federal Government to increase the funding provided through the Financial Assistance Grants to support Councils to deliver a range of vital services including roads maintenance. The Financial Assistance Grants are a key source of funding which enables local government to ensure that the community have access to a range of appropriate, accessible and fit-for-purpose services.

KEY ARGUMENTS
FAGs have fallen over time as a proportion of overall Commonwealth taxation revenue. In 2013-14, FAGs amounted to around 0.67 per cent of total Commonwealth taxation revenue, continuing a long trend of reduced FAGs as a proportion of the Commonwealth’s taxation revenue. The decision to freeze the indexation of FAGs until 2017-18 saw that proportion of revenue drop to less than 0.60 per cent. By contrast, these grants represented around 1 per cent of total Commonwealth taxation revenue in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The current base funding of approximately $2.6 billion should be increased to better reflect the actual cost of local government services and infrastructure and should be restored to a level equal to at least 1 per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

74
Wakefield Regional Council, SA
This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with state/territory Local Government Grants Commissions across Australia, to ensure the allocation of federal road funding is distributed to local governments in accordance with the National Principles of horizontal equalisation as required by the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

OBJECTIVE
The Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995 (the Act) requires the Minister, in formulating the National Principles for the allocation of roads funding, to have regard to the need to ensure road funding is allocated, as far as practicable, on a full horizontal equalisation basis. Section 6(3) of the Act defines horizontal equalisation as being an allocation of funds that:

• ensures each local government body in a state/territory is able to function, by reasonable effort, at a standard not lower than the average standard of other local government bodies in the state; and
• takes account of differences in the expenditure required to be incurred by local government bodies in the performance of their functions and in their capacity to raise revenue.

This means councils that incur higher relative costs in providing normal services and have a limited rate base should receive relatively more grant money. Similarly, councils with lower relative costs and a strong rate base should receive comparatively less grant money.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The purpose of this motion is to address the inequitable distribution of federal road funding to councils across Australia, which fits the theme of the National General Assembly of ‘Working Together for our Communities’.

Councils that cannot generate significant amounts of their own revenue are dependent on grant funding from other levels of government, including Identified Local Roads and Roads to Recovery Funding. The finances of councils with small populations and large road/freight networks is under pressure, which limits their ability to maintain critical assets and grow their region.

In accordance with Section 16 of the Act, the Australian Government’s Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, provided to the Hon Mark Coulton MP, in March 2020, the 2016-17 Local Government National Report (most recent report). The report presents
details on the distribution of the Australian Government’s financial assistance to local governments, specifically the Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs), which includes the General Purpose Grant and Identified Local Roads Grant. It should be noted that Roads to Recovery Funding is generally distributed in the same way.

The following table presents information taken directly from the 2016-17 Local Government National Report. It would appear from the data that the National Principle of full horizontal equalisation for the allocation of roads funding is NOT consistently applied by state/territory Local Government Grants Commissions; as a result, many rural councils are financially disadvantaged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Rural Average Grant Allocation Per KM of Road</th>
<th>Urban Average Grant Allocation Per KM of Road</th>
<th>Rural Allocation as a % of Urban Per KM of Road</th>
<th>Rural councils that receive less than the state rural average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>$1,080</td>
<td>$2,239</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>$1,425</td>
<td>$2,870</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>$638</td>
<td>$1,141</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>$285</td>
<td>$1,804</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tas</td>
<td>$2,384</td>
<td>$3,413</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>$972</td>
<td>$1,508</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>$731</td>
<td>$1,980</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2016-17 Local Government National Report, Australian Government - Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

It is recommended that this National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with state/territory Local Government Grants Commissions across Australia to ensure the allocation of federal road funding is distributed to local governments in accordance with the National Principles.

75
Liverpool City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly request that the Federal Government investigate a forward funding acquisition scheme that will enable local governments to provide infrastructure supporting the development of national assets; and that the investigation also consider funding opportunities through a value capture process or increased funds generated in the existing tax regime due to higher land values and transaction volumes associated with areas of major infrastructure delivery.

OBJECTIVE
It was identified that the current system for compulsory land acquisition is unfair and inefficient. Adequate contributions to acquire land take years to be collected while landowners, ratepayers and new residents are disadvantaged:

- New residents have to wait many years for infrastructure to be built;
- Council and ratepayers are forced to pay more due to increasing land values and inflation; and
- Landowners are stuck with a plot of land they can’t sell or develop.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Generally, when a major Federal or State infrastructure proposal is announced, there is a significant uplift in values of surrounding development land. Currently there is no method of value capture associated with the increased land values to allow distribution of funds to Councils to assist in the upfront acquisition of land or provision of additional community facilities generated by the surrounding development.
As a result of the announcements and commencement of construction of the Western Sydney Airport, land values of land identified with future development potential have escalated significantly. However, owners of land identified for a potential future public purpose are stranded in finding it difficult to sell their land.

It is considered that there is an opportunity for a funding scheme to be developed between the Federal and State Governments through tax revenues raised in association with property transactions in the Local Government Areas in which major infrastructure proposals are being undertaken.

This could include investigating opportunities in the current tax regimes, where at a Federal level a portion of GST raised on property transactions could be allocated into an acquisition scheme, and at State level increased revenue generated from stamp duty and land tax as a result of property value increases could be allocated into an acquisition scheme and a community facility development fund.

Currently within the NSW contributions regime, there is no mechanism for contributions to be raised for the delivery of community facilities in new development/growth areas.

76
Penrith City Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to invest in nation building projects where it can be established, they will facilitate better road and transport connections between cities and with regions around Australia. The criteria for these projects should be based on the economic opportunities they create for freight and passenger movement, migration, service provision and business support, as these are known to contribute best to our national productivity. This motion has been developed in collaboration with the Lachlan Shire Council and will be submitted jointly.

OBJECTIVE
When transport and logistics networks work effectively, they raise productivity levels and strengthen the economy.

As such, there is a multi-faceted and wide-ranging interdependence between cities and regional Australia. Good connections between cities and with regions around Australia for freight, passenger, migration, service provision and business support, are as important to national productivity as connections within cities.

As one example, the Castlereagh Connection is a significant national infrastructure project that has been identified by Infrastructure Australia as a high priority. It will improve road connectivity between the Central West and Western Sydney International Airport yet no detailed business case for the project has been developed at this time. The development of a swift transport link over or through the Blue Mountains would improve transport efficiency for agriculture and industry in the Central West and enhance the opportunities created through the construction of the airport.

KEY ARGUMENTS
An example of the benefits of investing in nation building projects where it can be established, they will facilitate better road and transport connections between cities and with regions is the potential links between the Central West of NSW and Western Sydney Airport.

The Central West of NSW is forecast by Infrastructure Australia to be among the seven most important regions in Australia measured in terms of GRP by 2031. Improved connectivity from this region to metropolitan Sydney would be particularly beneficial, as the new Western Sydney International Airport will have a substantial focus on cargo opportunities planned in the early phases.
The Central West region and Western Sydney have significant potential and resources to grow the Food Economy. Food manufacturing underpins the Western Sydney economy (EY & Food & Grocery Council 2017), and the region is the hub of Sydney’s nearly one-billion-dollar agriculture sector (ABARES 2016). The Central West is one of NSW’s premier agricultural regions with a gross value of product (GVP) of close to $2 billion p.a. or 13% of the region’s GVP. It also hosts a vibrant food processing and manufacturing sector, with a strong emphasis on local produce and wine that has spawned a strong hospitality and night-time economy in regional centres.

As such, investment in projects like the Castlereagh Connection; already a national infrastructure project identified by Infrastructure Australia and a swift link across the Blue Mountains would meet the criteria we propose. This road will:

- reduce gaps in the national transport network, particularly to the Central West and
- reduce congestion on the arterial road network
- unlock economic opportunities in tourism, freight and agribusiness, and
- maximise investment by connecting to planned North South infrastructure - Sydney Metro Greater West and the Outer Sydney Orbital as well as the existing Motorway network.

Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement a centrally funded aviation security mechanism that includes all airports providing domestic flights.

OBJECTIVE
The benefits to aviation are national. The Australian Government imposes increasing security regimes on regional airports because of the national obligations Australia has as a contracting state to the Chicago Convention. As such, aviation security is then a public good and a national responsibility.

If all airports are possible entry points for terrorists into the national aviation system, all passengers in the system needs to assist in paying for the security outcomes of the system. The current system charges the least likely victims the most.

Regional communities are finding it more and more difficult to foot the bill for the arms-race between terrorists and the Federal Government. Air travel is critical for keeping regional communities, agricultural producers, resource rich areas and tourist destinations connected to the national economy.

Terrorism aims to influence national policy, not local government politics. The mechanism terrorist use is by threatening the national economy. Aviation security is an international responsibility of the Federal Government (Chicago Convention). When regional communities can no longer pay for security, or see productivity or liveability decrease because of excessive security costs to protect the national economy, the nation as a whole suffers.

Hence a nationally funded scheme is necessary.

Broken Hill City Council, NSW

That the Federal Government ensures an adequate provision of charging points for electric vehicles in regional areas in order that regional areas are not deprived of the
opportunity to purchase vehicles and also to ensure that people living in metropolitan areas can travel to regional and remote areas. Once the use of electric vehicles gains momentum, regional Australia should not miss out on tourism due to not having adequate charging bays.

OBJECTIVE

The take up of electric vehicles in Australia has been slow so far compared to many other countries but is likely to accelerate rapidly in the next few years. This has the potential to bring many benefits not only to individual drivers but to their communities and to the country as a whole as long as there is a guarantee of a reliable network of fast recharging stations around the continent. This will address gaps in infrastructure transport connections and communications technologies that restrict economic development.

Once there is widespread adoption of fully electric vehicles, regional communities in the far west of New South Wales and other remote areas of the country will be disadvantaged if there is not a guaranteed access to a network of fast- charging stations along access roads. This will disadvantage residents of these areas and visitors because of their isolation and location. It is unlikely that there will be sufficient financial incentive for business to provide charging stations at charging intervals so there is a clear role for governments to ensure that the regions are not further disadvantaged.

Within regional townships, it will be important to ensure that sufficient public recharging facilities are made available in suitable accessible locations and in sufficient number.

Overseas car manufacturers, on whom Australia is likely to remain dependent for the foreseeable future, will increasingly focus on phasing out the production of conventional vehicles in favour of lower- emissions electric vehicles. Reducing the use of fossil fuels is of great importance for Australia and the world in order to reduce the impact of climate change. For car owners, electric vehicles will be less costly and cheaper to maintain and operate.

With security of access across the country to fast recharging facilities, a major obstacle to the wider take up of electric vehicles will be reduced. Regional communities will not be disadvantaged in the development of regional tourism because of difficulties of access. Residents of regional communities will be able to share in the benefits of these vehicles and be secure in the knowledge that their ability to access larger communities is preserved.

KEY ARGUMENTS

Broken Hill is a large regional centre with approximately 17,700 residents, predominantly located in a ~6km by 6km wide town. The nearest capital city, Adelaide, is accessible to Broken Hill via the Barrier Highway in the west (520km) or via Mildura in the south (690km).

Short intra-town trip distances and the high dependency on private car travel would make Broken Hill a good candidate to benefit from the adoption of EVs through reduced fuel and maintenance costs, lower noise pollution and air emissions. However, a barrier to the successful use of electric vehicles will be the current travelling range of electric vehicles which will make travel between the city and the closest large urban centres, namely Mildura 300km, Adelaide 500km and Dubbo 800 km not possible for electric vehicles unless there are sufficient fast-charging stations along the route. Already there have been instances of drivers of electric vehicles avoiding or cutting short their trips because of the fear of being unable to reach their destinations safely. “Range anxiety” is already an issue.
That the National General Assembly call on the Federal and State Government to:

- Develop a clear long-term investment pathway for major social infrastructure and accompanying health, community and educational services in outer urban growth areas
- Call for an equitable and consistent allocation of funding announcements that focuses on emerging communities in outer urban growth areas
- Prioritise the planning and early funded delivery of community services and infrastructure in emerging communities, in order to avoid the costly, and often inadequate, retrofitting of emerging communities.

**OBJECTIVE**
The National General Assembly calls on the Federal and State Governments to ensure the rebalancing of greenfield developments in outer urban growth areas where jobs, social infrastructure, transport and health, community and educational services are equally accessible for all people across the life stages.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**
Many emerging communities in greenfield developments in outer urban growth areas face substantial challenges related to place-making, community building and resilience. Often communities within growth areas are made of residents from diverse range of backgrounds having moved from neighbouring areas, cross-city, inter-state or from overseas. As local councils we celebrate and embrace the exciting opportunities to grow and learn which are presented by our new residents. These communities, however, often suffer from a lack of extant infrastructure and services for many of their formative years. It is vital that social and community infrastructure, accompanying health, community and educational services, along with transport and other basic infrastructure, is provided early and comprehensively. It is well researched, that the early delivery of infrastructure and services help to nurture a community, improve their resilience, future proof their liveability and promote placemaking.

That the National General Assembly urges the Environment Minister to better monitor and enforce relevant company membership of the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.

**OBJECTIVE**
Waste minimisation and recycling in the interests of environment and economy.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**
The government’s national plastics plan promises that all packaging used in Australia will be either reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. However, the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, a leading industry body, is warning the government is likely to miss its packaging targets unless there are significant reforms including mandatory enforcement. Local communities are keen to reduce plastic waste. Federal leadership is needed and a strong stand to phase out single use plastics as a matter of urgency.
That this National General Assembly of Local Government call on the Federal Government and Opposition to commit to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement.

OBJECTIVE
Setting of net-zero carbon emissions (net-zero) targets is currently being committed to by each Australian state and territory and increasingly across local government. The Federal Government is yet to make such a commitment which would greatly support the objectives the existing net-zero commitments as well as empower more organisations to also commit to this critical initiative.

The role of federal government in committing to net-zero by 2050 would be to derive a legislative framework and national policy to support cleaner technology, industry diversification, emerging green economies, and protection of carbon sinks (healthy ecosystems) to support its commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement. In addition, by committing to net-zero, the federal government would be providing a strong symbolic statement (both nationally and internationally) regarding its intention to provide a sustainable future for all Australians.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Keeping global temperature increases below 1.5°C from pre-industrial levels is considered critical to protecting lives and livelihoods. The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states that if emissions continue at current rates, global warming will likely reach the 1.5°C threshold between 2032 and 2050 and will continue to exceed 1.5°C unless rapid changes are made to achieve net zero carbon emissions (net-zero) by 2050.

Each Australian State and Territory has committed to net-zero by 2050, with the ACT setting a more ambitious target of net-zero by 2045 in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement. Local governments are increasingly setting net-zero targets in response to the impacts of climate change on their local community and to assist in achieving state and international emissions reduction targets. The Australian private sector is increasingly leading the push for decarbonisation, including Australia’s biggest emitters. By November 2020, more than 100 Australian businesses and organisations had made the pledge for net-zero by 2050.

An unclear national policy landscape for net-zero generates inconsistencies for local governments and states in establishing long term plans and commitments. This makes it harder for the private sector to drive innovation and stifles progress in emerging technologies. Therefore, Australia’s capacity to meet its Paris Agreement target and secure a safe and prosperous future for Australians is challenged.

Enormous opportunities exist for Australia to be a global leader in the transition to cleaner energy, sustainable industry and renewable technologies. A national target for net-zero would drive innovation and create opportunities for greener economies, build national resilience to Climate Change and reduce impacts that our communities are experiencing. A coordinated approach across all levels of government is essential for a national transition towards decarbonisation and preservation of natural ecosystems for carbon sequestration.

Lake Macquarie City, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to commit to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050. This target will provide a
clear intent, commitment and ambition to set future emissions pathways to support local and state government agencies, as well as the private sector, to plan and act.

OBJECTIVE
Setting a national net-zero greenhouse gas emission target for 2050 will give confidence and certainty to governments and the private sector. Local governments nationally continue to set targets to reduce emissions within their communities to minimise the effects of climate change and protect the health of their citizens and natural environments. It is critical to have a national target and leadership to ensure emissions reduction pathways at the state and local government levels maximise their impact in a co-ordinated and complementary manner, while continuing to grow our economy and protect our communities in a transition to a net-zero emissions economy.

Every state and mainland territory government in Australia has made aspirational or legislated commitments toward zero-emissions. This motion is consistent with the Climate Change Position Statement of LGNSW and its governing Fundamental Principles. It also seeks to align with the policy objective of the New South Wales State Government of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Similarly, Victoria’s Climate Change Act 2017 establishes a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with the Act also requiring five-yearly interim emission targets, and the ACT Government has legislated a target to be net-zero emissions by 2045.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Local government plays a significant role in reducing carbon missions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. In particular, councils are responsible for $408 billion worth of assets nation-wide and can provide a pathway to reducing emissions and lowering the operating costs associated with these assets. The effects of climate change also have the potential to damage council assets, cause serious disruptions to the delivery of council services, generate unbudgeted financial impacts and effect the wellbeing of the community.

Setting a national net-zero emission target for 2050 will give confidence and certainty to state and local governments as well as the private sector, drive investment in low carbon innovation in the community and reduce the cost of a transition to a net-zero emissions economy. The CSIRO has estimated that achieving net-zero emissions by, or soon after, 2050 will deliver higher economic growth than more moderate growth trends under the status quo.

There are different pathways to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, involving different combinations of action on renewable energy, energy efficiency, storing carbon dioxide (carbon sequestration) and emissions savings from other sectors such as agriculture and land use. Setting a national net-zero target will assist state and local governments to support industries and businesses to create new jobs in emerging low-carbon markets and increase opportunities for emission reductions in the community.

82
Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) to take the lead in maintaining and providing assets for flood modelling / forecasting purposes in regional areas.

OBJECTIVE
In recent years the level of support provided by BOM with regard to establishing and maintaining key flood forecasting assets in regional areas has reduced significantly. The responsibility has heavily shifted to a catchment approach lead by local governments and other catchment stakeholders.

There is a distinct feeling that BOM is retracting their responsibility regarding the maintenance and establishment of flood warning networks in regional areas.
KEY ARGUMENTS
The principal flood forecasting organisation in Australia is the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM). Historically BOM relied heavily on their own infrastructure in order to provide timely and accurate data. It appears in recent times that BOM is relying more so on locally supported and generated data that is maintained through local government. The viability and cost associated with establishing and maintaining this infrastructure is affecting local councils.

It is of the opinion of some local governments that a catchment wide approach to managing and maintaining flood forecasting services should be a shared responsibility. Principally, where shared infrastructure is required to establish flood data and subsequently flood modelling that the cost borne to construct and maintain this infrastructure be shared.

83
South Burnett Regional Council, QLD

That this National Assembly calls on the Federal Government to fund ABC transmission black spot sites to ensure coverage for all communities in the event of Natural Disaster.

OBJECTIVE
Council and Community Resilience.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The regional offices of the ABC as the national broadcaster are vital to regional, rural and remote communities in time of natural disaster. This resolution seeks to have appropriate broadcast towers situated to cover rural areas.

For example, in our region, our Council sits between the Wide Bay (Bundaberg) and Southern Queensland (Toowoomba) regions. The broadcast for Toowoomba 747AM and for Bundaberg 100.1FM or 855AM. Kingaroy sits between the two regions and stations and coverage is limited. This is particularly concerning in times of flood and other natural events as it severely limits communication. Regional internet is often limited so a digital solution is not practical. A blackspot programme similar to mobile telecommunications would assist in addressing this serious issue.

84
Parkes Shire Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to initiate a "Natural Disaster Preventative Measures Fund" to provide financial assistance to Local Government for planning mitigation strategies for extreme natural disaster events.

OBJECTIVE
Natural Disasters are affecting the entire Nation. A National pre-emptive approach, driven through Local Government to plan for and mitigate the impacts would benefit all.

KEY ARGUMENTS
It appears now generally accepted, that we are in a climatic sequence where these events are probabilistically more likely to occur. Rainfall will be more intense, dry periods will be more severe.

There is little detriment in planning for this apparent trend, but very significant impacts if we do not.

To encourage a National approach to disaster preparedness it is proposed that the Australian Government be encouraged to develop a "Natural Disaster Preventative Measures Fund", to provide financial assistance to Local Government for planning mitigation strategies for extreme natural disaster events.
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, and affording Commonwealth assistance as requested by established local and state authorities. This will ensure a national response to emergencies that will facilitate our communities’ resilience following disasters.

OBJECTIVE
The Australian Government is asked to take the lead in coordinating aspects of natural disaster response, so that all levels of government are better able to defend and restore our communities in times of crisis.

KEY ARGUMENTS
We make the following recommendations for Commonwealth involvement in coordinating:

• a review into the standard of telecommunications access in regional and remote Australia to ensure that all Australians have equal access to telecommunications
• rollout of the Mobile Black Spot Program as a matter of urgency
• investment in the development of digital evacuation technology that can send evacuation directions directly to the end user to aid our emergency services in the orderly evacuation of large populations
• a review of the impact of environmental legislation on prohibiting adequate fuel reduction around critical infrastructure and access to critical infrastructure
• an approach to asset protection involving government and industry bodies to protect infrastructure corridors and the assets therein
• in preparation for the next disaster, development of educational material outlining business responsibilities in terms of communication so that messaging is consistent with official directions
• development of assistance packages and funding guidelines prior to, and in readiness for, the next natural disaster
• more advance notice to be given when the Australian Defence Force are to be deployed to an area to facilitate identification of appropriate projects; and deployment of Defence resources much sooner to assist in clean-ups
• the Australian Bureau of Statistics to consider reviewing the scheduling of the Census. Census data is currently gathered in the winter months and does not address the surge in population during holiday season; this leads to a significant underestimation of service and amenity requirements and community facilities.
Central Highlands Regional Council, QLD

The National General Assembly calls on the federal government to commit increased funding to proportionately enhance regional connectivity to the digital economy.

OBJECTIVE
The Mobile Black Spot Programme is a Federal Government initiative that seeks to improve mobile phone coverage and competition in regional and remote Australia.

In earlier rounds of mobile blackspot funding sites were determined based on a competitive selection process, with mobile network operators to propose sites where they would build new or upgraded base stations to address identified black spots nominated by the public.

Despite the funding committed, only a small percentage of new base stations are being funded in Australia out of over 10,000 nominated sites. It is therefore considered that further funding is required to address this significant infrastructure problem.

Additionally, the governments focus on the digital economy has further alienated regional areas by not considering regional communities’ contribution.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Mobile Phone coverage is a major issue in regional and remote Australia, with over 10,000 sites nominated under the Mobile Black Spot Programme. These mobile black spots impact business and industry, road users and also impact access to services such as health, education and other critical Government services.

Communication is a basic necessity, and inadequate mobile phone coverage is therefore a significant issue, particularly for those living, working and travelling in regional and remote Australia. This should be prioritised to improve consistency of services, and close the gap for residents, businesses and visitors to these areas.

Tamworth Regional Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to investigate the failings of the National Broadband Network in rural and regional Australia and the exorbitant cost of connection for some businesses and residents.

OBJECTIVE
The National Broadband Network has continually underdelivered for communities in rural and regional Australia and the Federal Government needs to investigate the extraordinary costs of providing the NBN and for businesses and citizens to connect.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Recently a local business owner inquired to upgrade their fibre to node broadband connection to fibre to the premise and was quoted $1.3 million. This is entirely unsatisfactory when Tamworth could have had fibre to the premise in 2010.

The initial plan of the NBN was fibre to the premises then changed to fibre to the node as a cheaper option. While there are options for a free upgrade, it is capped and has caveats.

During the rollout in Tamworth’s CBD, the NBN Co ran new copper cabling into each premises but could have used fibre as they were running it through at the same time.

Once fibre is installed, speeds can easily be upgraded by just changing the optical units on either end and speeds can go from 1 gigabit up to hundreds of gigabits. Whole communities have been missed
in the rollout, without even getting access to Fixed Wireless connections and are still on ADSL1 connections, barely able to get 10 Mbps download speeds.

Sections of rural communities have also missed out, when the rest of the town has been provisioned. 5G is another area of missed opportunity for NBN Co. 5G is much faster but has a lot shorter coverage range, so more infrastructure is needed for it to be rolled out more densely in communities to provide adequate coverage. NBN Infrastructure could have been used to deliver this infrastructure and be a platform which mobile providers could use, but this hasn’t happened.

88
Hobart City Council, TAS

The National General Assembly calls upon the Australian Government to ensure a fair balance is made between the requirements of telecommunications carriers to roll out 5G technology and the protection of public spaces from undesirable infrastructure proliferation as has occurred in other jurisdictions.

OBJECTIVE
The motion calls for a fairer balance between the requirements of telecommunications carriers to roll out 5G technology and our public spaces and is an issue which affects many local government areas.

89
Cowra Shire Council, NSW

That this National General Assembly of Local Government calls on the Federal Government to institute discussions with all telecommunications providers, as a matter of priority, with a view to rapidly bringing services in regional and rural areas of Australia up to standards comparable with those in metropolitan areas.

OBJECTIVE
The cyber economy is the key economic driver of the 21st century. Telecommunications are an essential service. In an environment where, nationally, working from home is seen as increasingly possible and desirable, rural and regional people face obstacles of both inadequate service and high cost.

KEY ARGUMENTS
For too long, residents in regional and rural areas have been forced to risk their lives and/or livelihoods because of inferior access to mobile and internet coverage. Serious accidents regularly happen in areas without mobile access to emergency services. In emergencies such as bushfires and floods, lives are put at risk because of inability to receive warnings on mobile phones.

Existing businesses are unable to compete fairly with their urban counterparts. It is difficult to attract new residents or businesses to areas without adequate telecommunications services. “Black spot” rectification programs are patchy, inadequate and take too long.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the importance of, and dependence on, the telecommunications system. Inadequate services profoundly affect rural people’s lifestyle, as working from home, education at home, videoconferencing and internet connection with family and friends have become necessities.

Lack of adequate services puts the sustainability and prosperity of rural communities at serious risk in an era when regional and rural population growth is seen as increasingly desirable. It is incumbent
on the Federal Government to seek, by all means possible, to rectify this situation as a matter of equity and natural justice, and work with providers to restore their “universal obligation”.

90
Tamworth Regional Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to ensure the current review of the National Medical Workforce Strategy, and in particular how a “District of Workforce Shortage” is determined when allocating Medicare Provider Numbers, provides flexibility and opportunities for Medical Practitioners and Specialists to relocate to regional and rural communities so that they are not disadvantage in the delivery of adequate and essential medical services.

OBJECTIVE
The current method used to determine the allocation of Medicare Provider Numbers (MPN) is flawed and is significantly impacting the provision of medical services to rural and regional Australia. The system is currently the subject of a review by the Federally appointed Distribution Advisory Group. Council understands that this review has been delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and that the review will not be finalised until later in 2021.

The Commonwealth Department of Health is developing the National Medical Workforce Strategy in collaboration with the Medical Workforce Reform Advisory Committee (MWRAC). MWRAC provides a national perspective to align priorities for supporting medical practitioners and addressing workforce shortages. This is crucial that ALGA make appropriate representations on this matter on behalf of regional and rural Councils.

KEY ARGUMENTS
The current system is based on areas covered by a particular postcode and doesn’t adequately take into consideration the way specialist services are delivered in regional and rural areas. Regional centres provide services to a much broader catchment than that covered by their individual postcode. The local ophthalmologists in Tamworth estimate that they cover a population of 220,000 across the New England, North West Slopes, Upper Hunter and Upper Central West regions of NSW. While there are currently four ophthalmologists, two of them are over 60 and approaching retirement and one is only working part time. The third has a family and is working part time. The fourth specialist works under one of the retiring doctors and has a temporary MPN until 31 July 2021. This doctor wants to permanently practice in Tamworth. By enforcing the “District of Workforce Shortage’ and refusing this doctor a MPN, Ophthalmologist services will be reduced to two.

This doctor desires to permanently relocate to Tamworth but cannot secure a permanent MPN because Tamworth is not considered a "District of Workforce Shortage".

The use of postcodes may be appropriate to achieve a spread of specialists across metropolitan areas, but in regional areas it results in a small number of specialists required to work unreasonably long hours in order service large geographical areas. The issue is even more obvious when we have fully trained specialists that actually want to move to the regions but are unable to do so because they cannot obtain a Medicare Provider Number due to the need to obtain exemptions from the Minister under s19AB.

The next scheduled update to the District of Workforce Shortage system is due to be announced on 1 July 2021, and urgent representations are required to ensure the above issue is addressed for regional and rural Australia.
This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to dedicate funds to increase drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation options in rural and regional areas as a matter of priority.

OBJECTIVE
The Australian Institute for Health and Welfare recognises that the use of alcohol and other drugs is a major health issue in Australia and that the use of such substances is associated with a number of harms, both physical and social. These harms include chronic disease, mental illness, injury, premature death and dependence. There are also significant impacts on families and communities.

Evidence suggests that Australians living in regional and remote areas are significantly more likely to use substances such as methamphetamines and often experience worse health outcomes than those living in metropolitan areas. Despite this evidence, there are far fewer alcohol and other drug treatment agencies in regional and remote areas.

The Australian Government has recognised the inequality in the provision of treatment agencies as an issue, identifying the enhancement of “access to evidence-informed, effective and affordable treatment and support services for the whole population” as a priority issue under the 2017–2026 National Drug Strategy (Department of Health 2017). The National Drug Strategy has also identified methamphetamines and other stimulants as priority substances.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Methamphetamines, amphetamines and MDMA (ecstasy) are a category of synthetic psychostimulant drugs. Crystal methamphetamine (ice) is the purest form of methamphetamine and supplies the most intense high, as well as the most intense comedown. It also has the highest potential for dependence and chronic physical and mental problems. In 2019, 50% of Australian meth/amphetamine users reported that crystal methamphetamine was the main form used in the previous 12 months (National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019 conducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)).

People in remote and very remote areas are 2.5 times as likely to use amphetamines and methamphetamines as those in major cities. Similarly, cannabis use and the use of pharmaceuticals are higher in remote and very remote areas than in major cities. Mission Australia, one service provider in this field, delivers alcohol and drug services in most states and territories, and helped about 12,000 clients through their 23 alcohol and drug services in 2016–2017. The organisation’s submission into the provision of drug rehabilitation services in regional, rural and remote NSW identified the need “to invest in more drug rehabilitation services, early intervention, detoxification facilities and aftercare supports in regional, rural and remote NSW”.

People living in regional and remote areas face:
- poorer health outcomes than residents of metropolitan areas
- limited access to alcohol and other drug services
- socioeconomic disadvantage
- geographic isolation
- having to leave their family and community support to access residential rehabilitation and withdrawal facilities.

The impacts of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) use on users and their families, which then impact on their communities, include:
- decline in physical and mental health
• stress
• trauma
• loss of employment/financial strain
• relationship breakdown
• isolation
• homelessness
• involvement with the criminal justice system
• child neglect
• unplanned pregnancy
• additional caring responsibilities (caring for users/their children)
• violent behaviour
• financial strain.

92
Parkes Shire Council, NSW

The National General Assembly calls on the State and Federal Governments to invest further in social and affordable housing.

OBJECTIVE
• There is an opportunity to capitalise on the significant investments announced by the Victorian Government.
• Building new, affordable homes across Australia would create a construction boom and many thousands of new jobs, as well as bringing stability to the lives of people in need. People are suffering more than ever due to COVID-19.

Replicating the scale of investment made by the Victorian Government would result in generational change across the country.

KEY ARGUMENTS
• Preparing a 10-year national housing strategy would ensure creation of an integrated housing system, with opportunities taken to integrate not only federal and state, but also local government investment. A ten-year strategy that brings together investment, fiscal and financing reform and tangible actions that will take our housing system forward to an inclusive future.
• The Federal government policy focus on measures to promote home ownership will not benefit those in most need. A UNSW survey of leading Australian economists shows overwhelming agreement that investment should be targeted at social and affordable rentals rather than private ownership.

Identification of federal government land to be developed for affordable housing would increase potential for delivery of housing across the country, and not rely on State and Local Government to identify parcels of land. Federal leadership in this area would result in more likely acceptance of use of land for affordable housing at a State and local level.
The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to take action to strengthen the delivery of social and affordable housing across Australia by:

- Matching the direct funding being put forward by the Victorian State Government in the ‘big housing build’ - a $5.3 billion investment in social and affordable housing across Victoria.
- Preparing a National Housing Strategy.

OBJECTIVE

The themes and priorities contained in this motion are consistent with ALGA’s Strategic Objective of supporting "Stronger Community Resilience". Housing affordability has been declining across Australia for many years. Rent and purchase costs in the private housing market have outstripped growth in wages and income support, leading to a housing affordability crisis.

At the same time, the supply of subsidised housing (in the form of social and affordable housing) has not kept pace with demand. Access to safe and secure housing is a fundamental human right and key determinant of community health and wellbeing. As the closest level of government to the community, Councils provide support and services to people living in insecure housing or overcrowded dwellings. Council staff witness firsthand the negative impact on individuals, families and children. The COVID-19 crisis is likely to create further housing insecurity in the short term, particularly as income supports are reduced and more people face the risk of unemployment.

National leadership is required to encourage all three levels of government to play a role in increasing supply of social and affordable housing in response to local need, population growth, and economic challenges. The COVID-19 crisis provides this opportunity to invest in long term housing security for vulnerable communities, whilst stimulating the economy.

KEY ARGUMENTS

Residential property prices have been increasing across Australia for many years. Recent data shows the Residential Property Price Index (for the eight capital cities) has doubled over the past 15 years. At the same time, the proportion of social and affordable housing in Australia is relatively low, having fallen from 5.1 per cent in 2007-08 to 4.6 per cent in 2017-18. By contrast, social housing account for more than 15 per cent of total dwellings in several European countries, including Netherlands, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

There is significant unmet demand for social and affordable housing in Australia. It is estimated that around 727,300 additional social housing dwellings will be required over the next twenty years.

Investment in social and affordable housing is also an effective form of economic stimulus. Recent research has found that government investment in building 30,000 social housing dwellings would support up to 30,000 jobs, while the Victorian Government estimates that its $5 billion Big Housing Build program will generate around 40,000 jobs in the building industry over the next four years.

Previously, the Rudd Government’s Social Housing Initiative invested $5.2 billion over two years to build 19,500 new social housing units and refurbish another 80,000 following the Global Financial Crisis.

Through the COVID-19 crisis, the Federal Government has provided much-needed support for vulnerable communities and businesses. It now has an opportunity to continue this work by investing in social and affordable housing across Australia to provide more housing options for disadvantaged people, whilst stimulating economic, employment and skills growth during the construction phase of such a strategy.
The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to take action to strengthen the delivery of social and affordable housing across Australia by:

- Preparing a National Housing Strategy
- Introducing Inclusionary Zoning in Planning Schemes for Affordable Housing, as a tool that can be utilised by all Councils (where they so choose) to require affordable housing contributions as part of private development.

OBJECTIVE
Australia faces a structural housing affordability problem for the last 60 years, whereby the growth in housing cost has outstripped growth in wages. In addition, the last 20 years have seen a significant reduction in government investment in public housing. These factors, and others, have resulted in a housing system that is unaffordable for increasing numbers of Australians.

The lack of affordable, secure housing in Australia will have significant social and economic impacts, not only on the individuals affected, but upon our society. There is significant cultural, social and economic importance attached to home ownership, and the inability of increasing number of people to enter the property market will have significant consequences. For example, the Australian government relies on the fact that many retired Australians own their own home in calculating the aged pension. If future generations do not have secure housing, there will be significant impacts upon the ability of the government to support and house older Australians.

Capital cities including Melbourne and Sydney, have been acutely impacted by the lack of investment in public and community housing by successive governments. There are now more than 80,000 Victorians, including 20,000 children, on the waiting list for subsidised housing.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Housing affordability has become a critical issue in contemporary Australian society. There has been a structural affordability problem in Australia for the past 60 years – between 1960 and 2006 house prices increased by 2.7% per annum on average, while incomes increased by only 1.9% per annum. Housing prices have increased far beyond incomes. At the same time, housing supply has failed to keep pace with demand. Concessions and tax exemptions have increased demand, and incentives for housing supply have been limited. Rapid migration and population growth has increased demand for housing, particularly in large cities. There is a lack of institutional investment in Australia’s rental housing market in part because of the lack of tax concessions and low investment returns. Superannuation funds in Australia have invested in the housing market in Europe and the US, but to a very limited extent in Australia.

As house prices rise, increasing numbers of people, particularly those on low and very low incomes, are unable to enter the property market, and rely on private rental housing. In Darebin, 1.9 per cent of private rental stock is affordable to very low-income earners. Demand for affordable rental housing adds to demand for government-subsidised housing. There are more than 80,000 people, including 20,000 children, on the waiting list for social housing in Victoria1. Many commentators, and Council, believe housing in Australia is at a crisis point. All levels of government must take action to address declining housing affordability and the severe undersupply of affordable housing.
Byron Shire Council, NSW

The National General Assembly asks that all levels of government work together to investigate ways of making the delivery of affordable and accessible housing easier. We ask that the Federal Government consider:

a) investing more money into social housing,
b) reviewing the impact of current tax arrangements like negative gearing on housing affordability,
c) reviewing the effectiveness of rental assistance in its current form,
d) increasing the grant percentage of the National Housing and Infrastructure Finance Corporation finance from 20% to 50% to local councils,
e) implement a national RAPID program, supported by state and local governments to address homelessness,
f) where appropriate, donating crown land to be used for the provision of social and affordable housing,
g) changing policy and regulatory settings to better support and fund councils in addressing the affordable and accessible housing crisis in the Northern Rivers Region and other areas throughout the country. This could include enabling controls on existing housing that is kept empty for visitor accommodation, for example in Byron Shire, where approximately half the residential rental stock, over 3,500 properties, are listed, 80% whole houses and most are available year round for short term holiday letting,
h) exploring supporting councils to directly facilitate development through planning, the provision of land and financial levels such as subsidies.

OBJECTIVE
There is a need for Federal and State Governments to acknowledge that all people need a home and that the number of Australians who are homeless or in extreme housing stress is high and rising, and the recent increase in house prices is not only harmful to affordability and accessibility, but also an enormous risk to social and economic stability.

KEY ARGUMENTS
We are currently facing a housing emergency in our region and the cost to those people and the whole community is so big, it’s hard to quantify.

As a country, all levels of government need to work together to find a national framework that supports models found to be effective, socially responsible and replicable both in a fiscal and regulatory setting.

Liverpool City Council, NSW

That the National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to recommit to genuine partnership between three levels of Government in the City Deal model, and commit resources to progress stalled negotiations; reconcile real progress against planned outcomes such as in the Western Sydney City Deal; and leverage the learnings from the current City Deals to inform improved and replicable models for future Deals.
OBJECTIVE
Improved planning systems and governance frameworks are critical to streamline the actions of all three levels of government. Continued reform of the responsibilities shared between the three levels of government for planning, funding and delivery of strategic transport, economic and community development infrastructure is the only way forward. Sector-led infrastructure at state level leads to uncoordinated outcomes and assets, with communities suffering from delivery lags in critical community and social infrastructure.

By accelerating planning and investment collaboration frameworks, such as the City Deal program, all stakeholders including state agencies, landowners and developers, business and industry representatives are brought together in the planning and delivery framework to deliver well-sequenced high amenity places.

KEY ARGUMENTS
An holistic approach within and across all levels of government is needed to respond to COVID-19 and re-balance the spatial structure of our cities through evidence-based metropolitan scale planning.

Integrated planning that accounts for population growth, land use, transport and social infrastructure more responsibly and more equitably, and sequences investment and development appropriately is urgently needed.

To prevent the continued isolation of communities already burdened with poor access to job opportunities, infrastructure and services, metropolitan planning must adopt an integrated and place-based approach to development and infrastructure sequencing, with local government - representing the communities - at the centre of this process.

97
Northern Midlands Council, TAS

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider the implementation of additional Regional Deals throughout the country.

OBJECTIVE
The Federal Government has successfully implemented eight City Deals across the country. Following the success of this program a pilot program to implement Regional Deals was developed and to date, three deals have been implemented.

City and Regional deals are instrumental in ensuring all levels of government: federal, state and local, work together to create and achieve a shared vision for a specific area.

Expanding the rollout of Regional Deals could benefit a range of different areas across the entire nation.

KEY ARGUMENTS
City Deals are a partnership between the three levels of government and the community to work towards a shared vision for productive and liveable cities. City Deals work to align the planning, investment and governance necessary to accelerate growth and job creation, stimulate urban renewal and drive economic reforms.

Based on the Government’s successful City Deals model, Regional Deals have been developed to bring together all levels of government around a clear set of objectives.

Regional Deals support ‘a place-based approach’ by putting community-identified priorities at the centre.
To date, three Regional Deals have been signed: Barkly, Hinkler and Albury Wodonga. The progress of Regional Deals was a pilot program and it is proposed to lobby the Federal Government to expand the pilot program to enable future Regional Deals to be progressed.

98
Salisbury City Council, SA

The National General Assembly calls on the Federal Government to provide funding support to Councils across Australia for conducting citizenship ceremonies that have become a significant cost burden to local communities for undertaking a role on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia.

OBJECTIVE
All Councils in Australia, on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, conduct citizenship ceremonies and issue citizenship certificates in the name of the Federal Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs.

KEY ARGUMENTS
Further, where Councils have made (lawful) decisions to advocate for changing the date for Australia Day as a show of respect for Indigenous Australians, the Commonwealth Government has threatened to take away Councils’ authority to conduct the ceremonies. Whatever an individual’s view is about the Australia Day issue, the approach by the Commonwealth emphasizes where the authority and responsibility for citizenship lies with them.

It is also worth noting that often, Councils where the largest cohort of new citizens reside also (due to horizontal fiscal equalization principles) attract (proportionally) lower funding amounts of Federal Assistance Grants.

Councils are fulfilling a Commonwealth responsibility and should be compensated for it.

99
Darebin City Council, VIC

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Local Government Association to establish an advisory structure or mechanism formed with people with expertise from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to inform its work relating to cultural diversity and inclusion and have a say about decisions that affect them and guide Councils’ broader work relating to multicultural communities.

OBJECTIVE
Australia can be described as a vibrant and multicultural nation, being home to the world’s cultures and inhabitants who can identify with more than 270 ancestries. More than one-quarter of Australians are born overseas and almost half of all Australians have at least one parent born overseas. Collectively we speak more than 200 languages and languages other than English are spoken by more than one fifth of the population. The country considers the rich cultural diversity as its main strength which embodies its national identity.

ALGA is the national voice of local government, representing 537 councils across the country. In structure, ALGA is a federation of state and territory local government associations. As a peak body, the ALGA needs to demonstrate its commitment to recognise the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion and seek to advance and institutionalise that work through collaboration across councils, regional, rural and local communities and other government agencies. The ALGA needs to empowering people from culturally diverse backgrounds to give voice to multicultural Australia in
creating more cohesive cities and regions where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural economic and civic life - and adopts the position of “nothing about us without us”.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

Local councils are best placed to understand the complexity and diversity of their communities. As the peak body representing local government in Australia, ALGA is well positioned to lead and advocate on concerns relating to diversity and multiculturalism and enhance local government’s capacity to create welcoming and inclusive communities.

Many of Australia’s local government areas have large numbers of constituents from different cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. ALGA works closely with the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments to advance cultural diversity and represents local government concerns relating to systemic racism, citizenship, migration, settlement and social cohesion/inclusion policies.

ALGA works closely with the Commonwealth and state governments in the re-settlement of people who are refugees and/ or seeking asylum so that appropriate support services, such as housing, education, health and trauma counselling are provided in a coordinated and strategic manner. Achieving positive settlement outcomes and integration into the community are important for the stability and prosperity of communities.

While in place at State levels, there is currently no advisory body to the ALGA on population, migration, inter-culturalism and diversity. This poses a risk to ensuring integrated planning and response to these national challenges.

The establishment of a National Advisory Body to the ALGA on multiculturalism and cultural diversity would further enhance ALGA’s role improving settlement outcomes and enhancing the stability and prosperity of communities across Australia.

100
Wattle Range Council, SA

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Taxation Office to consider introducing a unique tax-free threshold for elected member allowances of $50,000.

**OBJECTIVE**

Attract and retain suitably qualified Elected Members to represent and support their local communities through the establishment and governance of their strategic plan.

**KEY ARGUMENTS**

Local Government Elected Member Allowances vary from $2,000 to $220,000 per annum depending on the size and complexity of individual Councils. The size and complexity of a Council does not determine how often an Elected Member attends a Council meeting or interacts with their community. Smaller Councils often find it difficult to attract and retain suitably qualified working age candidates because of competing employment priorities. Under these circumstances, Local Government Allowances are often taxed at the highest tax bracket - seriously eroding any financial benefit to be gained for their time. It is therefore proposed that the ATO explore the option of introducing a unique tax-free threshold for Local Government Elected Members of $50,000 to attract and retain suitably qualified candidates to this Nationally important tier of Government.
101
City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW

That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to reverse its 2014/15 decision to withdraw funding to pensioners and reinstate the 5% contribution towards the pensioner rate rebate.

OBJECTIVE
The NSW State Government currently contribute 55% to the pensioner rate subsidy, as per a statutory requirement under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW). Local Councils contribute the remaining 45% to the $250 pensioner rate rebate to help reduce the financial burden on pensioners. The Federal Government has not financially contributed to the pensioner rate rebate since 2014.

It is proposed that the Federal Government re-instate their contribution (5%) and that the amount be used to increase and/or top-up the current $250 pensioner rebate – as prescribed under the NSW Local Government Act 1993.

This signifies a recognition by Councils of the financial hardships experienced by pensioners. COVID-19 has also presented unique financial challenges, and local councils have acted accordingly, supporting eligible pensioners through targeted financial measures. Previously, the Federal Government contributed 5%, this was a direct result of the 1994 expansion of the pensioner concession card criteria that resulted in an increase in persons eligible for a pensioner concession. This Federal Government policy decision cascaded to local councils, resulting in an increase to the number of those eligible for a rates rebate.

However, the 5% Federal Government contribution ceased. Reinstating this contribution will provide much needed financial relief to our pensioners.

KEY ARGUMENTS
According to data provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics via the 2019 General Social Survey, over 22% of households report that government pensions and allowances are the main source of household income. This figure is increased when only considering those aged over 65 years.

Between 2016-17 and 2018-19, the government pension remained the main source of income for most retirees. As at 29 June 2018, 2.6 million Australians aged over 65 years received income support payments:

- 95% by way of the Aged Pension;
- 4.5% by way of the Disability Support Pension or Carer Payment

Australia’s ageing population is projected to increase from 16% in 2018 to 21-23% by 2066. This burgeoning shift in Australia’s population will have an impact on all tiers of government, including local. The financial implications of this shift need to be recognised and appropriately considered by the Federal Government, with measures implemented to curtail the financial burden placed on local councils.

The collective cost of the pensioner rebate provided by Councils in NSW is approximately $80 million per annum, while the cost of the pensioner rebate provided by the Federal Government is nil, even though the rebate is a welfare measure. This demonstrates the difference in the value placed on supporting pensioners via the rates rebate.

Pensioner rebates are recognised as one of the top five cost shifting issues affecting metropolitan councils, accounting for 6% of Council’s total income in 2015/16. Given the pensioner rebate is a welfare measure, the Federal Government can assist both pensioners and local councils by re-instatement the 5% contribution to the pensioner rate rebate. By doing so, the Federal Government can provide this much needed assistance to eligible pensioners. Doing so would demonstrate a shared collective approach to supporting pensioners in the community that require financial aid.
This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to develop and implement a weed management plan to protect agricultural land from incursions of well-established weeds such as Fleabane (Conyza spp.) and Silverleaf Nightshade (Solanum elaeagnifolium) in order to maintain the productivity of agricultural land and ensure the sustainability of regional communities by acknowledging that:

- Some well-established weeds are resistant to standard registered herbicides including Glyphosate
- Limited state and federal funding is provided for the control of such weeds under the Biosecurity Act 2015 through the General Biosecurity Duty
- the NSW Government Weed Action plan is focused on new and emerging weed varieties. Many weeds do not meet this criterion and therefore attract no State or Federal funding for their management.

OBJECTIVE:
It is vital that productive agricultural land continues to be viable in the interests of both regional communities and the nation as a whole. Incursions of weed species that negatively impact the productivity and yield of agricultural land have a profound effect on the sustainability of regional communities throughout Australia.

While State and Federal funding is available for the management of new and emerging species of weeds, limited funding is available for the management of weed species that are widespread and have impacted the productivity of agricultural land over an extended period. In ensuring agricultural land productivity is maintained, sufficient Federal and State funding must be provided to research and manage these well-established and widespread weed species.

KEY ARGUMENTS
- It is in the nation’s interest to ensure agricultural land productivity is maintained and improved.
- Our agricultural producers and farming communities make a vital contribution to producing reliable and affordable food for the nation. If agricultural land was to become less productive due to weed incursions, these agricultural and farming communities will become unsustainable for future agricultural output.
- Some well-established weeds are difficult to control with available registered herbicides and are more tolerant to glyphosate than most other annual weeds.
- As well as reducing crop yields, Silverleaf Nightshade contains toxic alkaloids and can poison stock.
- Many weeds do not meet the criteria for either state of federal funding under the NSW Weed Action plan because they are not classified as “new or emerging weed”.