

10.6. 2025 Australian Local Government Association Annual Conference (National General Assembly)

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ATTACHMENTS	1. 2025 NGA Discussion Paper - National Priorities Need Local Solutions and Call for Motions [10.6.1 - 24 pages]
CSP LINK	5. Our Civic Leadership 5.1 Lead North Sydney's strategic direction

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to consider the appointment of delegates to attend the 2025 Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly, and any proposed Motions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- This year's Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) will be held in Canberra from 25 to 27 June 2025.
- The theme for this year's NGA will be "National Priorities Need Local Solutions." ALGA is seeking motions that align with this theme and identify opportunities for new federal programs and policies that will support councils to build stronger communities. Motions are due by 31 March 2025.
- In addition, Council may resolve the appointment of delegates to attend the 2025 NGA. The early bird deadline for registrations is 23 May 2025.

RECOMMENDATION:

1.THAT Council consider any proposed Motions for submission to the Conference, noting the deadline of 31 March 2025.

2.THAT any Councillor wishing to attend the Conference advise the Chief Executive Officer before 16 May 2025.

Background

Council's Mayor and Councillors Expenses and Facilities Policy states:

7.32: Approval to attend a conference or seminar is subject to a written request to the Chief Executive Officer. In assessing a councillor request, the Chief Executive Officer must consider factors including the:

- a) relevance of the topics and presenters to current Council priorities and business and the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties;*
- b) cost of the conference or seminar in relation to the total remaining budget.*

Report

This year's NGA will be held in Canberra from 25 to 27 June 2025 and will be an opportunity for Local Government to clearly set and articulate an agenda to the Federal Government.

The theme for this year's NGA will be "National Priorities Need Local Solutions." ALGA is seeking motions that align with this theme and identify opportunities for new federal programs and policies that will support councils to build stronger communities. Motions are due by 31 March 2025.

Motions

The motions passed at the NGA inform ALGA's strategic direction and national advocacy objectives. ALGA takes the resolutions to Ministers, MPs, and decision-makers in Canberra and around the country through Ministerial meetings, forums, budget submissions, and advocacy campaigns.

A Notice of Motion to this year's NGA should either focus on:

- practical and deliverable programs and policies that the Australian Government can support and work directly with the local government sector to build our communities; or
- new program ideas that would help the local government sector to deliver national objectives.

To be eligible for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers, and subsequent debate on the floor of the NGA, Motions must:

1. Be relevant to the work of local government nationally.
2. Not be focused on a specific jurisdiction, location or region – unless the project or issue has national implications.
3. Be consistent with the themes of the NGA.
4. Complement or build on the policy objectives of ALGA and your state or territory local government association.
5. Be submitted by a council which is a financial member of their state or territory local government association.
6. Propose a clear action and outcome, i.e. call on the Australian Government to act on something.

7. Not be advanced on behalf of external third parties that may seek to use the NGA to apply pressure to Board members, or to gain national political exposure for positions that are not directly relevant to the work of, or in the national interests of, local government.
8. Address issues that will directly improve the capacity of local government to deliver services and infrastructure for the benefit of all Australian communities.
9. Not seek to advance an outcome that would result in a benefit to one group of councils to the detriment of another.
10. Be supported by sufficient evidence to support the outcome being sought and demonstrate the relevance and significance of the matter to local government nationally.

Motions must commence with the following wording: *This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to ...*

All Motions must be lodged online by Tuesday 31 March 2025 and all Motions must be supported by way of a Council resolution.

Delegates

The standard registration cost for each delegate is \$975 to attend.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required.

Financial/Resource Implications

Early bird registration closes 23 May 2025, and it is intended that Council take advantage of this discounted price. Accommodation has been pre-booked in anticipation of Councillor attendance.

Legislation

ALGA was founded in 1947 and, in 1976, established a secretariat in Canberra reflecting growing links with the Australian Government and an awareness of local government's emerging national role.

*National Priorities
Need Local Solutions*

24 - 27 June 2025 | National
Convention Centre Canberra

**National
General
Assembly
Discussion Paper**



ALGA
Australian Local
Government Association

KEY DATES

18 December 2024 | Opening of Call for Motions

31 March 2025 | Acceptance of Motions closes

24 June 2025 | Regional Cooperation & Development Forum

25 - 27 June 2025 | National General Assembly

TO SUBMIT YOUR MOTION

VISIT: [ALGA.COM.AU](https://alga.com.au)

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is pleased to convene the 31st National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA), to be held in Canberra from 24-27 June 2025.

As convener of the NGA, the ALGA Board cordially invites all councils to send representatives to this important national event.

The NGA is the premier national gathering of local governments, and provides councils with the opportunity to come together, share ideas, debate motions, and most importantly unite and further build on the relationship between local government and the Australian Government.

This discussion paper contains essential information for Australian councils considering submitting motions for debate at the 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA).

It is recommended that all councils and delegates intending to attend the 2025 NGA familiarise themselves with the guidelines for motions contained in this paper on page 6.

BACKGROUND TO ALGA AND THE NGA

ALGA was established 1947. In structure, ALGA is a federation of member state and territory associations. Its mission is to achieve outcomes for local government through advocacy with impact, and maximise the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of councils and our communities.

Since 1994, the NGA has built the profile of local government on the national stage, showcased the value of councils, and most importantly demonstrated – particularly to the Australian Government – the strength and value of working with local government to help deliver on national priorities.

Debate on motions was introduced to the NGA as a vehicle for councils from across the nation to canvas ideas. Outcomes of debate on motions (NGA Resolutions) could be used by participating councils to inform their own policies and priorities, as well as their advocacy when dealing with federal politicians.

At the same time, they help ALGA and its member state and territory associations gain valuable insight into council priorities, emerging national issues, and the level of need and support for new policy and program initiatives.

Given the structure of ALGA, its Constitution, and level of resources, the NGA does not bind the ALGA Board. However, the Board carefully considers NGA resolutions as it determines ALGA's policies, priorities and strategies to advance local governments within the national agenda.

This is your NGA and ALGA is pleased to act as the convener. ALGA's policies and priorities will continue to be determined by the ALGA Board in the interests of all councils.

The ALGA Board thanks all councils for attending the NGA and those that will take the time to reflect on the purpose of debate on motions outlined in this paper, and to submit motions for debate at the 2025 NGA.

SUBMITTING MOTIONS

The theme of the 2025 NGA is – *National Priorities Need Local Solutions*

In June 2025, Australia will either have a re-elected Labor Government, or a new Coalition or minority government.

The 31st National General Assembly of Local Government will focus on opportunities for councils to work with the next Federal Government to deliver local solutions that will help them deliver on their vision for the nation.

As the closest government to communities, councils understand local challenges and opportunities. They are a willing partner in government, and sustainably funded can provide place-based solutions to a range of national priorities including affordable housing, energy transition, road safety, increasing productivity, and improved health and wellbeing.

This discussion paper is a call for councils to submit motions for debate at the 2025 NGA to be held in Canberra from 24-27 June 2025.

Motions for this year's NGA should consider:

- Any new practical programs or policy changes that can strengthen the system of local government nationally to provide the services and infrastructure required to support and strengthen our communities; and/or
- New program ideas that that would help the local government sector to deliver place-based solutions to national priorities.

Motions should be concise, practical and implementable and meet the guidelines for motions set out in the paper.

You are encouraged to read all the sections of the paper but are not expected to respond to every issue or question. Your council's motion/s must address one or more of the issues identified in the discussion paper.

Motions must be lodged electronically using the online form available on the NGA website at: www.alga.asn.au and received no later than 11:59pm AEST on Monday 31 March 2025.

All notices of motions will be reviewed by the ALGA Board's NGA Sub-committee prior to publishing the NGA Business Paper to ensure that they meet these guidelines. This sub-committee reserves the right to select, edit or amend notices of motions to facilitate the efficient and effective management of debate on motions at the NGA. For example, the sub-committee may recommend an overarching strategic motion to encompass several motions on the same topic.

All NGA resolutions will be published on www.nationalgeneralassembly.com.au.

As the host of the NGA, ALGA will communicate resolutions to the relevant Australian Government Minister and publish Ministerial responses as they are received on this website.

Please note that if your council does submit a motion, there is an expectation that a council representative will be present at the NGA to move and speak to that motion if required.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the 2025 NGA.

CRITERIA FOR MOTIONS

To be eligible for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers, and subsequent debate on the floor of the NGA, motions must meet the following criteria:

1. Be relevant to the work of local government nationally.
2. Not be focused on a specific jurisdiction, location or region – unless the project or issue has national implications.
3. Be consistent with the themes of the NGA.
4. Complement or build on the policy objectives of ALGA and your state or territory local government association.
5. Be submitted by a council which is a financial member of their state or territory local government association.
6. Propose a clear action and outcome ie call on the Australian Government to act on something.
7. Not be advanced on behalf of external third parties that may seek to use the NGA to apply pressure to Board members, or to gain national political exposure for positions that are not directly relevant to the work of, or in the national interests of, local government.
8. Address issues that will directly improve the capacity of local government to deliver services and infrastructure for the benefit of all Australian communities.
9. Not seek to advance an outcome that would result in a benefit to one group of councils to the detriment of another.
10. Be supported by sufficient evidence and demonstrate the relevance and significance of the matter to local government nationally.

Motions must commence with the following wording:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to

...

Please note: that resolutions of the NGA do not automatically become ALGA's national policy positions.

The ALGA Board carefully considers NGA resolutions as it determines ALGA's policies, priorities and strategies to advance local governments within the national agenda, but the resolutions are not binding.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

It is important to complete the background section of the submission form. Submitters of motions should not assume that NGA delegates will have background knowledge of the proposal. The background section helps all delegates, including those with no previous knowledge of the issue, in their consideration of the motion. Please note, motions should NOT be prescriptive in directing how the matter should be pursued.

Try to keep motions practical, focussed and capable of implementation to ensure that relevant Australian Government Ministers provide considered, thoughtful and timely responses.

Try to avoid motions that are complex, contain multi-dot points and require complex cross-portfolio implementation.

All motions submitted will be reviewed by the ALGA Board's NGA Sub-committee, in consultation with state and territory local government associations, to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers.

When reviewing motions, the Sub-committee considers the criteria, clarity of the motion and the importance and relevance of the issue to local government.

If there are any questions about the substance or intent of a motion, ALGA will raise these with the nominated contact officer. With the agreement of the submitting council, these motions may be edited before inclusion in the NGA Business Papers.

To ensure an efficient and effective debate, where there are numerous motions on a similar issue, the NGA Sub-committee will group these motions together under an overarching strategic motion. The strategic motions will have either been drafted by ALGA or will be based on a motion submitted by a council which best summarises the subject matter.

Debate will occur in accordance with the rules for debate published in the Business Papers and will focus on the strategic motions. Associated sub-motions will be debated by exception only or in accordance with the debating rules.

Any motion deemed to be primarily concerned with local or state issues will be referred to the relevant state or territory local government association and will not be included in the NGA Business Papers.

All motions require:

- a contact officer;
- a clear national objective;
- a summary of the key arguments in support of the motion; and
- endorsement of your council

Motions should be lodged electronically using the online form available at www.alga.com.au.

Motions should be received no later than 11:59pm AEST on Monday 31 March 2025.



SETTING THE SCENE

The theme for the 2025 NGA – **National Priorities Need Local Solutions** – highlights the unique role Australia’s 537 councils can play delivering local, placed-based solutions that meet the needs of their communities, while addressing broader national priorities.

The 2025 NGA provides you - the elected representatives of Australia’s local councils and communities - with the opportunity to engage with the Federal Government and key Ministers.

Further, it is your opportunity to advocate for new or expanded programs and key policy initiatives that could strengthen local governments and its capacity to deliver services and infrastructure to local communities across the nation.

This year’s call for motion focusses on twelve priority areas:

- Intergovernmental relations;
- Financial sustainability;
- Roads and infrastructure;
- Emergency management;
- Housing and homelessness;
- Jobs and skills;
- Community services;
- Closing the Gap and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation;
- Data, digital technology and cyber security;
- Climate change and renewable energy;
- Environment;
- Circular economy

1. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

For almost 30 years, local government was represented by ALGA on the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), providing local input into national decision making. However, when COAG was replaced by National Cabinet in March 2020, local government was not included.

National Cabinet is a forum for the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers to meet and work collaboratively; and is a key mechanism in Australia's intergovernmental architecture. A representative of local government, the President of ALGA, is invited to meet with National Cabinet once each year, as well as one meeting of the Council on Federal Financial Relations comprising the Commonwealth Treasurer as Chair and all state and territory treasurers.

While National Cabinet was established to support a coordinated national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of local representation to this body has unfortunately impacted on decision making.

The Government's review into the COVID-19 response – published in October 2024 – found that Australia's 537 councils were critical for the implementation of National Cabinet decisions during the pandemic.

The inquiry also recommended National Cabinet would benefit from having more structured engagement and active consultation with local government to ensure future decision-making is informed at a local level.

In addition to attending one meeting per year of National Cabinet and CFFR, ALGA also represents local government on a range of Ministerial Councils and Forums, including the Infrastructure and Transport Ministers Meeting, National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting, Local Government Ministers Forum, Joint Council on Closing the Gap, Planning Ministers Meeting, Environment Ministers Meeting, Cultural Ministers Meeting, Energy and Climate Change Ministers Meeting, Road Safety Ministers Meeting, and Building Ministers Meeting.

Given the important role councils play delivering local solutions to national priorities, how can intergovernmental arrangements be further improved in Australia?

Are there new initiatives and programs that could be adopted to improve the level of cooperation and collaboration between the Australian Government and local government?

2. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainably funded, councils can play a key role delivering local solutions to national priorities. However, across the country many councils are facing significant financial challenges and are struggling to fund the delivery of core community services.

Every year councils are being asked to do more with less as a result of cost shifting, inadequate state and federal funding and, in some jurisdictions, rate pegging.

In 2024/25 councils will receive \$3.27 billion in federal Financial Assistance Grants. This is approximately 0.5% of Commonwealth taxation revenue, which is half the amount it was in 1996. The Australian Parliament is currently undertaking an Inquiry into local government sustainability, to which ALGA, State and Territory associations and many councils provided submissions

ALGA's submission to this inquiry highlighted that:

- If local government were provided annually with an additional \$350 million for the maintenance and delivery of quality open space, Australia's gross domestic product (GDP) would increase by \$858.9 million each year.
- If local government were able to effectively increase its capacity to perform regulatory services in planning and building, there would be an annual saving of \$859 million for development proponents and would generate an additional \$1.67 billion in GDP each year.
- Increased block transfers of Commonwealth funds to local governments can deliver greater efficiency and administrative cost savings of \$236 million and would generate increase GDP by \$330.8 million each year
- Reducing local government staff turnover can save \$425 million in avoided costs and lead to a \$619.9 million increase in GDP each year.
- Investing an additional \$1 billion each year into the maintenance of local government roads would increase GDP by \$354.6 million annually.

ALGA also stressed that the inquiry should not recommend any actions that will improve the financial sustainability of some councils to the detriment of others.

What are the opportunities to address financial sustainability across councils, and support their capacity to deliver local solutions to national priorities?

Are there improvements to be made to existing federal funding programs and arrangements that would support improved local government financial sustainability?

3. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Local governments are responsible for around 75% of Australia's road network by length, and play an important role supporting productivity and improving road safety.

However, many councils are not resourced to effectively maintain their local roads, and independent research from the Grattan Institute in 2023 identified a \$1 billion annual local government road maintenance funding gap.

In November 2023 the Government announced that Roads to Funding would be progressively increased from \$500 million to \$1 billion per year over the forward estimates, effectively halving the current funding gap.

In addition to local roads, councils build and maintain community facilities and infrastructure worth more than \$100 billion nationally.

In 2020 the Australian Government introduced a new Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, which saw \$3.25 billion provided to all councils for local projects on a formula basis. ALGA's 2024 National State of the Assets highlighted the success of this federal funding program, reporting a \$1 billion improvement in the condition of local government facilities since the 2021 report.

Are there new programs or initiatives that the Australian Government could adopt to improve the long-term sustainability of local government roads and community infrastructure?

Are there programs or initiatives that the Australian Government could provide to improve the sector's capacity to manage local government infrastructure and to integrate these plans into long-term financial plans?

Are there opportunities for the Australian Government to support councils to invest in local infrastructure that will help address national priorities?

4. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Australia is experiencing weather events of greater intensity and frequency – which leads to increased impacts on communities and council resources. Over the past two years, more than 60 per cent of local government areas have been declared natural disaster areas, many of them multiple times.

In 2022 ALGA successfully advocated for a new \$200 million per year Disaster Ready Fund, and to date two rounds of funding have been provided through this program. This program has been legislated to run for five years.

Both rounds of the Disaster Ready Fund have been significantly oversubscribed, and ALGA is advocating for a significant increase in federal funding to improve the emergency management capability and capacity of local government.

The Royal Commission on National Natural Disaster Arrangements made two important recommendations for local government – calling for State and Territory Governments to take responsibility for the capacity and capability of local government for the functions which are delegated to them (recommendation 11.1), and recommending States and Territory Governments review arrangements for resource sharing between local governments (recommendation 11.2).

Released in November 2024, the Colvin Review (Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding) and Glasser Review (Independent Review of National Natural Disaster Governance Arrangements) both support a strategic shift towards disaster risk reduction and resilience. The Colvin Review also supports a major capacity uplift for local government and an enhanced national training and exercise regime which tests and builds local government capacity.

Councils are encouraged to draw on their practical experience of the improvements that could be made to managing emergencies.

Please note that many aspects of emergency management are state or territory responsibilities, and your motions should focus on how the Australian Government could assist.

What new programs, or improvements to existing programs, could the Australian Government develop to partner with local government to improve the current natural disaster management systems to further assist in recovery and build resilience?

How can the Government best support Australian councils to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters?

5. HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Australia is currently facing a housing crisis which is resulting in more people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness, while also preventing required worker movement across the country.

Councils are not responsible for building housing. Many councils do, however, play a key role in facilitating housing supply by appropriately zoning land and approving development. Others are going above and beyond to address the housing crisis, albeit without adequate resourcing.

One of the biggest issues is a lack of funding for infrastructure such as roads, water and power connections that are necessary for new housing developments.

The National Housing Accord – which ALGA is a signatory to on behalf of local government - sets an ambitious target of 1.2 million new, well-located homes over the next five years.

Research commissioned by ALGA, and delivered by Equity Economics, showed that there is currently a \$5.7 billion funding shortfall for the enabling infrastructure required to bridge the gap between current constructions and Australia's housing targets.

Another significant issue is local government's lack of input into setting housing policy at both a state, territory and federal level, While ALGA represents councils on a wide range of ministerial councils, it is not currently a member of the Housing and Homelessness Ministerial Council or National Cabinet.

A key focus for councils is ensuring that any new housing developments are not just supported by enabling infrastructure, but also the local facilities and services that are vital for healthy, productive and resilient communities.

What new programs and policies could the Australian Government develop to partner with local government to support the provision of more affordable housing?

How can the Australian Government work with councils to address the causes and impacts of homelessness?

6. JOBS AND SKILLS

Local government is a major employer in Australia providing employment, career advancement and training opportunities for more than 200,000 Australians, across an estimated 400 occupations.

However, councils – like many employers across the nation – are experiencing skill shortages that hinder their ability to meet community needs.

The 2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey show nine out of every ten Australian councils are facing jobs and skills shortages.

65% of respondent local governments said that project delivery had been impacted or delayed by vacancies, skills shortages, skills gaps or training needs.

The top five most cited skill shortages that local governments experienced were engineers (as noted by 46% of 2022 survey respondents), urban and town planners (40%), building surveyors (36%), environmental health inspectors (30%) and human resources professionals (29%).

Drivers of skill shortages include difficulty attracting young people to local government jobs, lack of available training courses, wage competition, and lack of resources to upskill the current workforce such as access to training facilities for rural/remote councils, workplace supervisors, subject matter experts, and contextualised training resources.

National priorities, such as increasing housing supply, cannot be achieved without support from local government and the right people to do the work.

Are there programs or initiatives that the Australian Government could implement that would enhance local government's capacity to attract and retain appropriately skilled staff now and into the future?

Are there programs or changes to existing programs that would increase local government's ability to employ apprentices and trainees?

Are there other initiatives that the Australian Government could provide to improve the sector's ability to plan and develop skills fit for the future?

7. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Councils provide a wide range of services based on local characteristics, needs, priorities, and the resources of their community.

Some of these services are provided to address market failure, and many of them are provided by councils on behalf of other levels of government.

It is important to note that nationally local government is more than 83% self-sufficient ie funded at the local level either through rates, fees and charges, sale of goods and services, or interest. The Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that total local government annual expenditure in 2022-23 was \$48 billion.

Only 17% comes from grants and subsidies from other levels of government. Unfortunately, many of these grants and subsidies are tied, or competitive funding programs, or require matching funding which restricts the ability to address local priorities in the way the council and community might need.

Local government community services are broadly defined, and may include but are not limited to:

- environmental health including food safety;
- childcare, early childhood education, municipal health;
- aged care, senior citizens;
- services to people living with disability;
- programs to address disadvantage, to reduce poverty and homelessness;
- sporting and recreational programs;
- arts and cultural activities, programs and festivals;
- tourism and economic development activities;
- library services

Noting the funding arrangements for the provision of local government community services are there programs and initiatives that the Australian Government could implement to improve the delivery of these services?

Are there reforms or improvements in national community services program that would help local governments support the Australian Government to deliver on its national objectives?

8. CLOSING THE GAP AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RECONCILIATION

In 2021, ALGA co-signed a landmark national agreement to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. At the heart of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Partnership are four agreed priority reform targets and 19 socio-economic targets in areas including education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Local governments are uniquely placed to support partnerships to address long term service gaps and support their delivery. Councils are elected by their communities and have the longitudinal scope to develop a community's economic, skills, and infrastructure needs.

Local governments already play a significant role in helping their communities and the Closing the Gap outcomes. However, councils need appropriate resourcing, be it through place-based initiatives, or broader programs, to better facilitate and meet program objectives in their communities.

Are there programs or initiatives that the Australian Government could adopt to assist local government to advance reconciliation and close the gap?

Are there practical programs or initiatives that local government and the Australian Government could introduce to maintain, build and strengthen partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and governments?

9. DATA, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND CYBER SECURITY

Provision of information technology to all Australians is vital to innovation, economic growth, and social equity. However, it is potentially even more important to regional Australia where the tyranny of distance increases the inequity of services available – including education, health, economic and social. Innovative technology is becoming more broadly available and could boost productivity and economic growth.

Councils around Australia continue to embrace new technologies to improve their service delivery standards and broaden consultation and engagement with their local communities. However, implementation can be hindered without access to basic technological infrastructure and the necessary IT skills and resources.

In recent times, cyber-attacks on major corporations and other businesses have resulted in significant data breaches. It is a timely reminder as digital information, services and products become an increasing feature of modern business operation including in local government.

Like all risks, local government must manage the risk of cyber-attacks and address cyber security.

While this is primarily a responsibility of the sector itself, governments at all levels must work together to ensure that the public have confidence in government information management systems and its security.

Drawing upon your council's experience, and your knowledge of other councils within your state or territory, are there programs and initiatives that the Australian Government could implement to help local government develop its digital technology services and infrastructure?

Are there actions the Australian Government could take to improve cyber security within the local government sector?



10. CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Climate change is resulting in more frequent and severe disasters, coastal erosion, and rising heat, which are all impacting on the liveability of Australian communities.

Local governments play a role in emissions reduction through reducing their corporate emissions and supporting broader national processes of decarbonisation through community engagement, and provision of services and infrastructure.

The 2024 Local Government Climate Review found that 89% of councils have set or planned ambitious corporate emissions reduction targets.

Councils also play a critical role supporting their communities through change, helping them to adapt and build their resilience. The latest Local Government Climate Review found that two-thirds have done a climate risk assessment and 72% are implementing initiatives.

Barriers to adaptation include internal resourcing (70%), funding (67%), complexity and not knowing how to respond (53%), and limited technical expertise and capacity (48%).

Councils need support to adequately assess climate risk and vulnerabilities and adequately address them in plans, policies investment decisions and engagement with communities. Unfortunately, funding and support from other levels of government has failed to keep pace, placing an inequitable burden on the sector.

The rapid increase in renewable energy projects in regions across Australia is resulting in uneven and inconsistent community benefits being offered and delivered to communities. It is also placing significant pressure on local governments to plan, negotiate and secure an enduring constructive legacy associated with renewable energy projects.

Local governments are the only local democratic institution in a position to convene local interests and broker long term social and economic benefits from renewables projects, and should be recognised and supported for their role in maintaining social license for renewables projects.

Noting the Australian Government's approach to reducing emissions, are there partnerships, programs, and initiatives that local government and the Australian Government can form to achieve Australia's 2050 net zero emissions target?

What are the opportunities to support councils to increase community resilience to the impacts of climate change?

What support do councils need to ensure that renewable energy projects deliver lasting benefits to the communities that house them?

11. ENVIRONMENT

The Australian Government's Nature Positive Plan states "Almost half of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP) has a moderate to very high direct dependence on nature. The rate at which we are eroding the environment poses tangible risks to Australia's economic, financial and social stability."

Australia's 537 local governments undertake broad and diverse work to support environmental outcomes.

However, councils do not receive adequate support for this work, which includes managing pests, weeds, and biosecurity threats, contributing to water security and management, managing parklands and reserves, and community education.

In recent years the National General Assembly has considered a range of environmental issues, and passed resolutions on biodiversity, biosecurity, conservation, climate change and water security.

How could the Australian Government partner with local government to strengthen Australia's environmental services and infrastructure?

What new programs could the Australian Government partner with local government in to progress local regional and national objectives?



12. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Australia's volume of waste continues to increase compared with population growth and GDP, even with rates of recycling improving over the past decades.

The 2022 National Waste Report showed that waste generation has increased by 20% over the last 15 years (8.3% from municipal waste). Since 2006-07, recycling and recovery of Australia's core waste has increased by 57% (+22% in municipal) however Australia continues to have one of the lowest rates of recycling among OCED countries.

Local governments are under pressure to respond to community demand for addressing pollution, while at-capacity landfills and emerging problematic materials pose serious operational challenges.

Collecting, treating, and disposing of waste costs local governments an estimated \$3.5 billion annually.

ALGA believes the onus for waste reduction should be borne by industry, not local governments. Mandatory product stewardship approaches, including payments to local governments for their resource recovery services, would ensure the principle of producer responsibility is operationalised and the cost and risk burden on local governments is rebalanced.

How could the Australian Government further strengthen product stewardship arrangements to support local governments in their endeavours to increase recycling and reduce the volume of waste?

How could the Australian Government partner with local government to advance the circular economy?



CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to read this discussion paper and your support for the 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government.

A final reminder:

- Motions should be lodged electronically at www.alga.com.au and received no later than 11.59pm on Monday 31 March 2025.
- Motions must meet the criteria published in this paper.
- Motions should commence with the following wording: 'This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to...'
- Motions should not be prescriptive in directing how the matter should be pursued.
- Motions should be practical, focussed and relatively simple.
- It is important to complete the background section on the form.
- Motions must not seek to advance an outcome that would result in a benefit to one group of councils to the detriment of another.
- When your council submits a motion there is an expectation that a council representative will be present at the 2025 National General Assembly to move and speak to that motion if required.
- Resolutions of the National General Assembly do not automatically become ALGA's national policy positions. The resolutions are used by the ALGA Board to inform policies, priorities and strategies to advance local governments within the national agenda.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the 2025 National General Assembly in Canberra.

