



THE HON JOSH FRYDENBERG MP
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

MC16-012691

Mayor Troy Pickard
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

17 OCT 2016

Dear Mayor

Thank you for your letter concerning the outcomes of the 21st National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA).

I appreciate the work of the NGA as a forum for local government to identify issues of national importance, and welcome its focus this year on some of the environmental challenges we face as a nation. I am pleased to take the opportunity to respond on the issues you raise with information about how we are reducing duplication in environmental approvals, helping councils to take action on climate change and support for more strategic approaches to coastal management and forest planting. Your resolutions highlight the role we all have to play across government, industry and community in protecting and improving our environment for future generations.

I enclose detailed responses to each of the NGA resolutions. I thank the councils that submitted these resolutions and encourage you to provide them with a copy of this response. The Australian Government looks forward to continuing to work with local government on practical, local and long-term action to tackle Australia's environmental issues.

Thank you for writing on these matters,

Yours sincerely

JOSH FRYDENBERG

Resolution 36

Submitted by the Town of Gawler SA

That the National General Assembly endorses the Paris Agreement under the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted in December 2015, and requests the Australian Government to create partnerships and provide assistance to local governments to help implement the Paris Agreement including support for action:

- 1. By local governments to reduce their environmental impacts related to Climate Change*
- 2. To encourage innovation by local governments, local communities and local businesses to assist in reducing environmental impacts relating to Climate Change*
- 3. To help with community education to understand Climate Change and effective ways to contribute to the goals set out in the Paris Agreement*

Resolution 36.1

Submitted by Nillumbik Shire Council VIC

The Australian Local Government Association calls on the Australian Government to provide direct funding to assist local governments and their related greenhouse action alliances to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Australian Government response

The Australian Government welcomes the commitment displayed by local governments to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The Government is helping businesses and people who want to take action to reduce carbon pollution. The Australian Government's Carbon Neutral Program certifies organisations, products and services against the National Carbon Offset Standard. Five local governments (City of Sydney, City of Melbourne, City of Yarra, former Leichhardt Council and Moreland City Council) have already been certified as carbon neutral organisations. In 2017, the Standard will be expanded to include carbon neutral buildings and precincts, allowing further scope for local government engagement.

The \$2.55 billion Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) is supporting Australian businesses, communities and landholders to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Fund is supporting a broad range of practical projects across the economy including improving energy efficiency, avoiding deforestation, encouraging the regeneration of forests, and fire management in Australia's north. There are already at least ten local governments benefiting from the Fund. We encourage all local governments to consider opportunities to reduce their emissions. Further information on the Fund is available at www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au

The Australian Government's \$6.2 million Solar Communities Program will support local responses to climate change and deliver lower electricity costs for community organisations. Of this funding, \$5 million will go to community groups across Australia to install rooftop solar PV, solar hot water and battery storage systems for community owned buildings.

Resolution 40.1

Bega Valley Shire Council NSW, Eurobodalla Shire Council NSW and East Gippsland Council VIC

That the National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone in consultation with state, territory and local governments as a means of defining the roles and responsibilities of each tier of government in relation to coastal zone management.

Australian Government response

The Australian Government recognises coastal management is an important issue that requires cooperation between all levels of government, business and the community. Integrated coastal management will ensure that our coastal resources will be managed more effectively, particularly in the context of climate change.

Towards greater collaboration and integration

The Government provides national leadership on building resilience and managing climate risk by providing climate change science and adaptation information.

The Government provides the leadership role by:

- Coordinating national adaptation efforts, such as the CoastAdapt which is a national scale tool that supports local decision making and action.

The Government is supporting development of CoastAdapt and other Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility initiatives through a commitment of \$9 million over three years from 2014-15.

- Leading action on climate change impacts with its state and territory colleagues through the Adaptation Working Group under the Meeting of Environment Ministers.

The Working Group shares adaptation information, aims to minimise research duplication and seeks to maximise opportunities to work together on priority matters of common interest, such as coastal climate risk.

The Australian Government has also provided \$13 million to assist NRM organisations to manage climate risk by delivering regionalised climate change information.

There are two main components of this funding, including:

- New projections of Australia's future climate, developed by CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology, released in early 2015.
 - This project has produced a range of regional reports and brochures, and a Climate Change in Australia website (www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au) that provides access to a range of tools, datasets and guidance material, including a climate analogues tool.
- Tailored regional climate change impacts and adaptation information delivered to NRM organisations as part of the Impacts and Adaptation Grants Programme.
 - This project has produced a wide range of reports, tools, spatial data, websites, maps, decision-making tools, guides and workshops.
 - Some examples of regionally specific issues addressed by the projects include the impacts of climate change on: water resources and water refugia; dust; native and invasive species; biodiversity; fire; carbon sequestration in vegetation and soils; and the grazing, horticulture and tourism industries.

The focus in 2015-16 is on making project outputs available to a broader audience and working with NRM planners to integrate these outputs into future planning.