



AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

17 February 2017

Kyogle Council  
PO Box 11  
KYOGLÉ NSW 2474

To the Mayor, Councillors and CEO (please distribute accordingly)

**2017 National General Assembly of Local Government – Call for Motions**

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the national peak advocacy body for local government. ALGA's work includes but is not limited to the establishment of national policy and extensive liaison and lobbying with departments, Ministers and other parliamentarians at the Commonwealth level to achieve better outcomes for local councils.

The ALGA Board is comprised of delegates from each member association who refer matters of national relevance to the ALGA Board for consideration at regular Board meetings.

The 2017 National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA), to be held in Canberra from 18 to 21 June, is an opportunity for individual councils to identify matters of national relevance to the sector and to submit notices of motion to seek support at the NGA for these matters to be considered by ALGA as national policy, for its advocacy role or for more immediate action by ALGA on behalf of the sector.

On behalf of the ALGA Board I am writing to invite your council to participate in the 2017 NGA by submitting a notice of motion.

In doing so, please note the ALGA Board is calling for motions under the theme of 'Building Tomorrow's Communities'. This year, the NGA will focus debate on motions that address how councils can work in partnership with the Australian Government in particular to meet the current and future needs of local communities.

To assist you and your council to identify motions that address the theme of the NGA, the ALGA Secretariat has prepared the attached short discussion paper. You are encouraged to read all of the sections of the paper, but are not expected to respond to every question in each section. Your motion/s can address one or all of the issues identified in the discussion paper.

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. be consistent with the themes of the NGA;
3. complement or build on the policy objectives of your state and territory local government association;
4. be from a council which is a financial member of their state or territory local government association;
5. propose a clear action and outcome; and
6. 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.

In accordance with previous NGAs, the ALGA Board will consider notices of motions for inclusion in the NGA agenda and will align similar motions, prioritise motions according to the NGA theme and take any other steps required to facilitate an effective and productive NGA outcome for participants.

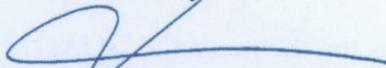
Motions should be lodged electronically using the online form available on the NGA website at: [www.alga.asn.au](http://www.alga.asn.au). All motions require, among other things, a contact officer, a clear national objective, a summary of the key arguments in support of the motion, and endorsement of your council. Motions should be received by ALGA no later than 11:59pm on Friday 21 April 2017, electronically in the prescribed format. Any administrative inquiries can be directed to ALGA by calling 02 6122 9400.

I encourage you to ensure the views of your council and your community are represented at the 2017 NGA and accordingly look forward to receiving your council's notice of motion.

In addition to those councils sending delegates to debate motions, we welcome the attendance of all elected members and staff who are interested in this year's NGA theme and the engaging list of speakers and sessions we have planned for the event. The NGA will be held during a sitting week and you may also wish to consider meeting with a parliamentarian before, during or after the NGA to pursue matters of specific interest to your region or council.

In closing, please accept my thanks for all the work you do on behalf of your local community and I look forward to welcoming you at the 2017 NGA - the premier event for Australian councils.

Yours sincerely



Mayor David O'Loughlin  
President, Australian Local Government Association

cc: State and Territory Local Government Associations



**AUSTRALIAN LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

**National General Assembly of  
Local Government  
Building Tomorrow's Communities  
18 - 21 June 2017**

**Call for Motions Discussion Paper**

## Submitting Motions

The National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) is an important opportunity for you and your council to influence the national policy agenda.

To assist you to identify motions that address the theme of the NGA, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Secretariat has prepared this short discussion paper. You are encouraged to read all of the sections of the paper, but are not expected to respond to every question in each section. Your motion/s can address one or all of the issues identified in the discussion paper.

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. be consistent with the themes of the NGA
3. complement or build on the policy objectives of your state and territory local government association
4. be submitted by a council which is a financial member of their state or territory local government association
5. propose a clear action and outcome
6. 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.

Motions should generally be in a form that seeks the NGA's support for a particular action or policy change at the Federal level which will assist local governments to meet local community needs. For example: *That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to restore indexation to local government financial assistance grants.*

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Please note that for every motion it is important to complete the background section on the form. Submitters of motions should not assume knowledge. The background section helps all delegates, including those with no previous knowledge of the issue, in their consideration of the motion.

All motions submitted will be reviewed by the ALGA Board's NGA Sub-Committee as well as by 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 importance and relevance of the issue to local government. Please note that motions should not be prescriptive in directing how the matter should be pursued. With the agreement of the relevant council, motions may be edited before inclusion in the NGA Business Papers to ensure consistency. If there are any questions about the substance or intent of a motion, ALGA will raise these with the nominated contact officer. 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.

## **Introduction**

This year, debate at the NGA will focus on the role of Local Government in building tomorrow's communities. The discussions will look at how councils can work in partnership with the Australian Government to meet the current and future needs of local communities.

Tomorrow's communities will undoubtedly be shaped by the ambition and drive of their people, as well as the investments that governments, businesses and individuals make in people, infrastructure and the places we live and work.

In the Australian context, governments at all levels must focus on creating the environment for people and businesses to innovate and prosper in both cities and the regions. Government service delivery needs to be appropriate and responsive to the needs of communities, and appropriate infrastructure must be provided to drive productivity and social equity.

Local government strives, wherever possible, to assist communities to be productive, innovative and cohesive. Councils can enhance their capacity to respond to new and unforeseen challenges and identify opportunities to help communities build resilience and increase overall prosperity.

The Australian Government has shown that it understands and appreciates that Local Government's strength lies in its capacity to identify and respond to the diverse and emerging needs of communities across Australia. The Australian Government has also shown its commitment to working with Local Government to achieve real and meaningful outcomes for local and regional communities.

ALGA is calling for notices of motions that outline policy suggestions or principles the Australian Government can implement to support Local Government. Notices of motions that meet the criteria will be included in the NGA Business Papers and debated at the NGA. Motions carried at the NGA will be considered by the ALGA Board, and will be forwarded to the Australian Government for their information, response and potential implementation.

### *Supporting our Cities*

The Australian Government has recently focused greater attention on the role of cities, and the Government's potential role in supporting them to be liveable, accessible and productive. Great cities attract, retain and develop increasingly mobile talent and organisations, encouraging them to innovate, create jobs and support growth.

Increased urbanisation is a major issue, globally and within Australia. The populations of Australia's major cities are at record levels, with the 2011 Census finding that 88.9 per cent of Australians live in urban Australia – people are following jobs to urban centres. The overwhelming majority of jobs are located in cities, which is where most new jobs are being created. Australia is among the most urbanised countries in the world. More than 75 per cent of Australia's population lives in the country's 20 largest cities, with more than 60 per cent alone living in Australia's 5 largest cities: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

The economic output of our major cities has grown and their importance to the national economy should not be underestimated. However, alongside that growth there is greater demand on transport systems than ever before. Issues of space and the potential conflicts of usability continue to

challenge us, along with the utility and long term capacity of freight hubs, ports and airports and the movement of goods and people.

The Australian Government released its Smart Cities Plan in April 2016. The plan is just one of the ways that the Commonwealth aims to build an agile, innovative and prosperous nation. Key elements of the plan include establishing City Deals (one for each capital city and one for a regional centre in each state), the \$50 million Smart Cities and Suburbs Program (to fund innovative technology solutions to fix complex local problems) and the establishment of an Infrastructure Financing Unit to look at alternative infrastructure financing options such as value capture.

The Australian Government's National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA), released in December 2015, is another strategy to encourage innovation, growth and productivity, and to increase Australia's capacity to compete in a global market. The NISA focuses on four key pillars - culture and capital, collaboration, talent and skills and government as an exemplar. These pillars provide a framework for Australian innovation policy with initiatives worth \$1.1 billion over four years designed to drive smart ideas that create business growth, local jobs and global success. From supporting start-ups and entrepreneurial activity to fostering R&D and developing the networks of people and technology that support innovation, NISA aims to improve Australia's ability to compete internationally and to harness new sources of growth to deliver the next age of economic prosperity in Australia.

The NISA also looks to address the educational requirements to position our children for the future given that 75 per cent of jobs in the fastest-growing industries in the next 5 to 10 years are likely to require science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills. In developing their NGA motions, councils are encouraged to think about and focus on the strategic ways that the Australian Government can support Australian cities.

### *Supporting Regional Australia*

The Australian Government has renewed its focus on our regions and regional development policy. Following the 2016 Federal election, Senator Fiona Nash was appointed Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Local Government and Territories. With the portfolio being elevated to Cabinet, the appointment was seen as a very positive step for local government and for regional development in Australia.

In November, last year the Government released details of the new Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF). The BBRF will invest \$297.7 million over four years in infrastructure projects and community investments to create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities into the future. Minister Nash has indicated that the Government will release the Australian Regional Development Policy Statement early this year, which will highlight and focus political attention on Australia's regions.

Local governments are well-positioned to design, create and, above all, maintain tomorrow's communities. Whether these communities are metropolitan, urban, regional or remote, their local council knows the people best and understand the unique strengths of the area.

In developing their NGA motions, councils are encouraged to think about and focus on the strategic ways that the Australian Government can support regional Australia.

## NGA Themes

ALGA is calling for motions for this year's NGA to explore the theme *Building Tomorrow's Communities* as well as the following six sub-themes:

1. Governance – community driven planning and development
2. Innovation – identifying and harnessing the key pillars of growth
3. Liveability – maximising amenity, design and community cohesion
4. Data driven public policy – using high quality data to grow the evidence base
5. Social capital – improving the capacity of citizens and optimising workforce trends
6. Technology and Infrastructure – identifying and investing in tomorrow's foundations.

This discussion paper provides some background and poses a number of questions for councils to consider when developing notices of motion for the NGA. This paper is not intended to limit the discussion or thinking around the theme, local governments roles or the sub-themes.

### *1. Governance – community driven planning and development*

Good governance is essential to tomorrow's communities. Ensuring appropriate structures and institutions are in place to oversee the planning and development of the community is as critical as ensuring the community's access and involvement in these structures. The governance structures of tomorrow will cross traditional borders as cities grow, regions are redefined and their functionality (e.g environment, economic, social) changes.

Tomorrow's governance arrangements encompass, but go beyond, our current institutions, tools, or structures. Tomorrow's governance issues may often involve several layers of competency within agencies from across the different levels of government. Our communities need to consider not only the geographical borders but the very definition of these bodies as they grow to incorporate public, private, not-for-profit and community representation.

In strengthening governance, councils are looking to maximise community involvement in governance structures as well as considering ways to extend committees and sub-structures that inform and guide councils. Councils are also considering how best to encourage future leaders to get involved in local government.

In developing your council's notice of motion you may wish to consider:

- What support do you need from the Commonwealth to improve the governance arrangements in your community?

### *2. Innovation – identifying and harnessing the key pillars of growth*

There are examples in Australia, and around the world, where local authorities have embraced innovation to increase economic activity in their communities. This promotes entrepreneurship, boosts the local workforces, diversifies the economic base and helps to future-proof communities.

Councils have successfully enhanced their community's innovative spirit and reputation by: developing new innovation and commercial precincts such as in the City of Boston; improving council business and service delivery by capitalising on new technology such as using apps to enhance community engagement and communication or deliberately directing council business to support local start-up businesses such as in the City of Melbourne; and identifying changes in local industry and workforce trends, and adopting proactive strategies to ensure the community's ability to capitalise on the work of the future and areas of future economic growth such as in the North Melbourne region.

Underpinning these efforts are the networks and connections between people and technology. Innovation and experimentation are key, much like the ability to manage and leverage constant change. Innovation is an ongoing process. Councils need to extend and develop their networks with businesses, service providers and developers. Councils also need to consider how information can be used and shared, and how they can best harness technology to build and foster growth in their communities.

In developing your council's notice of motion, you may wish to consider:

- What support do you need from the Commonwealth to improve innovation within your community?

### *3. Liveability – maximising amenity, design and community cohesion*

Defining "community" can sometimes be difficult. In cities, we may commute many hours a week from work to home or we might be in walking distance. Transport congestion and the price of housing are among the chief concerns. In non-metropolitan areas, the challenges might appear different, such as ensuring ongoing economic development and protecting the sense of community that is so valued, but the fundamental work is the same. Local government has a core role to ensure that our communities, whether regional, urban, suburban or rural are places people want to live because they see the community's future is promising.

Liveability is defined as the sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life, including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities. Maximising the liveability of tomorrow's communities, wherever they are, is Local Government's core business.

Identifying the barriers to making your community more liveable can be key in directing thinking and work in this area. Councils around Australia are considering their roles and responsibilities in maximising community liveability.

In developing your council's notice of motion, you may wish to consider:

- What support do you need from the Commonwealth to enhance the liveability of your community?

### *4. Data driven public policy – using high quality data to grow the evidence base*

Data is ubiquitous in today's world. Not only is it the substance that drives information technology and the digital world, but data is the source of information that government and industry are using to plan for the future. It is fundamental that policy should be made based on the best available information. The challenge for government is not just having access to, and the use of, that data but

also ensuring the quality of that information. Urban planning and renewal is one area in which digital innovations have huge potential. City planning projects require extensive public engagement and consultation. Data captured representing communities' concerns and ideas, and desired amenities and suggestions for development, paired with more effective, automated analysis could facilitate an unprecedented level of open engagement between citizens and government.

Rather than piecemeal data coming in from various channels, the simplification of communications through connected infrastructure could generate real-time data and allow governments to address problems more effectively. This enhanced engagement process would create more liveable cities with better services and a higher quality of life.

At the heart of addressing those macro challenges is the question of how data can be drawn on to gain a deeper understanding of the complex interrelationships at play in our communities, and how this may allow us to improve services and infrastructure for our communities.

Councils have access to and own a wide range of data sources. It is worth considering how these sources are used and whether there are untapped sources within council systems. Urban planning has been identified as an area where there maybe benefits from drawing on big data, however councils are considering what other functions enhanced data analytics could assist with. Sometimes knowing the right question to ask is as difficult as finding the answer, given the range of data sources available, there may be a range of insights and intelligence available that would directly enhance councils decision making.

In developing your council's notice of motion, you may wish to consider:

- What support do you need from the Commonwealth to tap into big data and data analytics to provide greater insights into your community and to enhance decision making?

##### *5. Social capital – improving the capacity of citizens and optimising workforce trends*

Our communities need to prepare for, and adapt to, the needs of the modern labour market while positioning themselves to provide jobs for future generations. This will be challenging given the rate of change occurring in the labour market. Some estimates claim that up to 40 per cent of the jobs that currently exist will disappear over the next 15 years with much of these losses predicted to be in manufacturing, mining and agriculture.

To offset declining demand for jobs in manufacturing, mining and agriculture, communities will need to implement proactive and strategic interventions such as investing in education around STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects as well as complementary skills such as language, culture, resilience and adaptability. Strong employment growth is also predicted in healthcare and social assistance, retail, and tourism and hospitality.

It is also anticipated that individuals will be required to take greater responsibility for keeping their skills up to date and in line with industry requirements through lifelong learning and training.

Our communities face the difficult task of identifying the most appropriate workforce investments for tomorrow's economy. Identifying the specific competitive advantages of your community and region will assist in guiding these decisions, and well as ensuring there are well-developed community engagement mechanisms around the issue.

In developing your council's notice of motion, you may wish to consider:

- What support do you need from the Commonwealth to strengthen the social capital in your community?

## 6. *Technology and Infrastructure – identifying and investing in tomorrow’s foundations*

The current focus on smart cities looks at harnessing smart technology to improve the liveability and efficiency of large cities. Real-time traffic management, real-time energy consumption management, integrated public transport networks and data collecting sensors are examples of smart technology which may contribute to the efficiency of a city.

The Australian Government’s Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet defines smart cities beyond the traditional view to include “support for productive, accessible, liveable cities that encourage innovation and create jobs and growth, with a commitment in both regional and metropolitan areas for smart investment, smart policy, and smart technology”. The Smart Cities and Suburbs Program, announced in 2016, encourages collaborative projects that apply innovative smart technology to solve complex urban problems. The program has a strong focus on “collaboration between local governments, private sector, research bodies and not-for-profit organisations to improve liveability, productivity, and sustainability of Australian regions”.

Other key elements of the Australian Government’s smart cities plan include the concept of the 30-minute city (where travel to and from any location within the city takes no longer than 30 minutes), City Deals and the establishment of the Infrastructure Financing Unit to identify smarter ways to finance investment in our cities.

The smart cities agenda isn’t just focused on large cities. The approaches and ideas can be applied to smaller cities, regions and towns. For councils of all sizes the opportunities technology brings to enhancing service provision and communication within your community are applicable; the careful prioritisation and investment in technology and infrastructure are some of the most important decisions your council will make to position your community for tomorrow.

In developing your council’s notice of motion, you may wish to consider:

- What support do you need from the Commonwealth to allow your community to benefit from the smart cities agenda?