

## **Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly**

### **Dispatchable Power**

#### **Motion:**

That the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to commit to investment in the development of future energy sources in order to ensure diversity of alternative sources of dispatchable power.

#### **National Objective:**

The issue of climate change affects all communities across Australia, and it is the responsibility of all levels of Government to address ongoing emissions and their impact. Utilising new technology to develop alternative sources of energy which are more environmentally responsible will assist in meeting efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A commitment by the Federal Government to investment in the development of alternative energy sources will assist in advancing Australia in the sphere of innovation and generate future employment

Affordability of power is a major issue across the country and alternative energy sources may provide potential cost savings for consumers.

#### **Summary of Key Arguments:**

Australia has long relied on the easy accessibility of its natural resources such as coal, oil and natural gas. With these resources existing in finite quantities, and current Community concerns around their contribution to climate change, there is a strong argument for exploring alternative energy sources. Other countries around the world are actively researching and exploring new technology.

While it is possible for a local council to be a vocal supporter of alternative energy sources such as hydrogen, biofuels and solar energy, and actively encourage investment in their own Region, the support of all levels of Government is required to provide potential investors with confidence. A local government will have access to limited funds with which to entice investment, however a pledge of funding from the Australian government will send a clear indication to the community of their commitment to both climate change and the economic development that can come from emerging technologies and industries. This economic prosperity could potentially extend to renew rural regions across Australia who may have natural resources relevant to the new energy economy.

It is acknowledged that there has been a period of significant rises in the prices of electricity and gas. The Australian Government, while not the primary influencer of price outcomes, can still play a role through incentivisation and coordination of action at other levels of government. Any flow on effect to prices from these actions would ultimately, to some extent, be expected to extend to end users. This would be of benefit to both the business and consumer sectors.

**Council Endorsement:** Sought at General Meeting 19 March 2019

## **Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly**

### **Freight Lines and Supply Chains**

#### **Motion:**

That the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly supports the Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) policy of the Australian Government and the associated future budget commitments.

#### **National Objective:**

Growth and productivity can be supported on a national level through investment in our key freight roads. However, the significance of the required outlay means investment can only proceed if supported by the highest level of government as a continuing, engaged stakeholder.

While there exists an initial commitment to fund corridors, it is imperative that capital injections continue to be made on an ongoing basis beyond these original works.

#### **Summary of Key Arguments:**

The Australian Government has pledged to invest \$3.5 billion via the Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) initiative over a 10-year period. It will be the role of the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities to engage with the relevant stakeholders to fully develop specific packages of work. The vision is for improvements in productivity and efficiency on key freight roads via a more reliable, and safe, road network. The improved connectivity will better connect regional communities and facilitate tourism opportunities.

The objectives of the ROSI initiative are to:

- Deliver via a corridor approach
- Fund corridors which primarily deliver improvements to freight movements
- Target corridors which support regional economic growth
- Support partnerships between Commonwealth and state governments with local government and industry
- Where appropriate, support targeted freight road reforms, and
- Support wider national reforms.

Improved access to regional corridors could also potentially reduce accessibility issues in times of natural disaster.

**Council Endorsement:** Sought at General Meeting 19 March 2019

## **Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly**

### **Regional Airport Costs**

#### **Motion:**

That the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider appropriate support to regional airports in order to provide affordable travel.

#### **National Objective:**

Australia's regional airports are fundamentally a community asset, generally owned and operated by the local government authority in the region.

Regional airports are economically significant in the context of their own region, forming a vital part of the social and economic life of their community and in some cases being the only practical means of access to emergency services. Funding a regional airport can be challenging for a regional airport with deficits not an uncommon financial result. New industry can be a benefit to a regional town but a preference to engage fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) workers and the resultant increase in the demand for flights can lead to travel price increases that are difficult for long-term residents to tolerate.

Support to regional airports would ensure that communities retain connectivity with other areas.

#### **Summary of Key Arguments:**

approximately 400 regional airports in Australia servicing a large area of the country. Of these, in the vicinity of 40% experience budget deficits which must be borne by their local government owners via the ratepayer base.

The regulatory requirements involved in maintaining and operating airports can pose significant financial impacts on the operator and can therefore be considerable when viewed in the context of a local government budget, particularly those with a small revenue base.

Airport upgrades in order to meet future needs can also be challenging as economic conditions can have such a strong influence on predicted needs. Long lead-in times also mean that expansion investments must be made well in advance of the forecasted increases.

Airlines are also reticent about committing to particular activity levels, due to their own competitive pressures and may withdraw from a route rather than persist until new infrastructure is complete.

Local governments, as owners of these assets, are cognizant of the benefits afforded through ownership but must balance this with the ongoing requirement to fund.

**Council Endorsement:** Sought at General Meeting 19 March 2019

## **Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly**

### **Regional Unemployment**

#### **Motion:**

That the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider appropriate initiatives to support employment in rural regions.

#### **National Objective:**

Traditionally, employment opportunities in regional areas have differed from those in the capital cities however there has been a shift in regional opportunities with the services industry now more prevalent than was previously the case.

It needs to be noted, nevertheless, that small towns in the smaller regional areas which are more isolated from major metropolitan or regional cities continue to struggle to attract service professionals.

Australia's unemployment rate of 5.5% is not reflective of what can be seen in regional areas across the country.

#### **Summary of Key Arguments:**

Despite the changing patterns in employment sectors, unemployment at higher than the national average continues to exist in regional areas across Australia.

The June 2017 census revealed that 32.7% of the Australian population, approximately 8 million people, lived outside the greater capital city areas. Not surprisingly, mining arises as a major employer across regional Australia with healthcare also experiencing an increase although there has been a decline in both manufacturing and agricultural industries in the last decade.

It is acknowledged that traditional roles are declining in rural and regional areas, be it due to rationalisation of industries or the lingering effects of natural disasters.

The strength of Federal initiatives and investment far outweighs advocacy for economic development to create employment opportunities at a purely local level. Promotion of sectors such as tourism will potentially generate economic activity in smaller areas and create new employment opportunities.

**Council Endorsement:** Sought at General Meeting 19 March 2019

## **Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly**

### **Healthcare in Regional Areas**

#### **Motion:**

That the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to consider appropriate initiatives to improve the level of healthcare in rural regions.

#### **National Objective:**

An Australian Institute of Health and Welfare study in 2018 highlighted that Australians living in rural and remote areas across the country generally present inferior statistics in terms of health and welfare outcomes. Among the findings were a higher mortality rate, higher rate of deaths due to land transport accidents, higher incidence of smoking, lack of exercise, high rate of overweight or obese people.

#### **Summary of Key Arguments:**

While studies continue to indicate the inferior health standards outside the greater capital city areas, the Australian Government also needs to acknowledge the current service gap and that it continues to grow, particularly in the smaller towns.

Programs to promote regional areas to healthcare professionals have not provided the necessary increases, prompting the Royal Flying Doctor Service to ask that the government and policy makers need to work with the relevant communities to develop innovative ways to deliver more comprehensive health services. Sustainability needs to be a consideration in these discussions.

Virtual service delivery methods are a means by which to meet the challenge to provide access to services for small towns and communities however funding is required.

**Council Endorsement:** Sought at General Meeting 19 March 2019