



COMMUNIQUE

More than 1,300 local government leaders from across Australia gathered in Canberra from 24-27 June for the 31st National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA).

We were welcomed to country for the National General Assembly by Ngunnawal woman and Co-Chair of ACT Reconciliation Council, Selina Walker. The Assembly recognised the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognised any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. The Assembly paid its respects to their elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledged the vital and ongoing contributions First Nations peoples continue to make to our nation.

Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, formally opened the Assembly and spoke about the role of community leadership and local engagement in building national resilience and unity, including the importance of teaching our younger generation the importance of civic governance.

We heard from a range of Federal Ministers across the Assembly including: The Honourable Kristy McBain MP, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, The Honourable Julian Hill MP, The Honourable Josh Wilson MP, The Honourable Darren Chester MP, Dr Anne Webster MP and the Honourable Kevin Hogan MP.

There was broad acknowledgement from Ministers that councils play a critical role in supporting their communities and that the role has expanded significantly, as has the financial pressure councils face. That is why local government is calling for urgent action to ensure the financial sustainability of councils.

Delegates heard from Mark Bouris AM and Dr Merriden Varrall who unpacked global economic forces shaping Australia's local economies, including trends in trade, security, and investment.

Jason Clarke, world leading consultant on issues of leadership and innovation, closed Day 1 of the NGA with an energising and practical presentation on how councils can take bold ideas and translate them into tangible, community-focused change.

Day 2 of the NGA featured the launch of ALGA's exciting new research "Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate". The report finds that Australia's councils are expected to spend more than \$2 billion over the next five years to future-proof their communities from the changing climate, resulting in up to \$4.7 billion in avoided costs to communities.



ALGA President Mayor Matt Burnett noted “Climate-resilient infrastructure is expensive and takes time to build, so we need sustainable funding from the Federal Government to implement long-term planning and adaptation now and into the future”. That is why “We are asking the Government for a new \$400 million climate adaptation fund, distributed to all Australia’s councils each year, to deliver ongoing and sustainable place-based climate solutions” Mayor Burnett said.

Councils considered the way AI is shaping the future with presentations from Stephen Scheeler, founder of The Digital CEO and co-founder and CEO of Omniscient, and Tim Golsby-Smith, co-founder and CEO of myLot.

The 2025 NGA saw the return of concurrent listening sessions providing an interactive platform for delegates to engage directly with federal agencies and sector experts on key policy issues. The listening sessions included:

- Housing and community infrastructure – where the discussion covered a range of challenges from housing affordability, the prohibitive cost of housing infrastructure, ideas around housing and homelessness.
- Emergency management capacity and capability – where attendees shared examples of what has worked in their communities and highlighted remaining challenges. This included the need for long-term funding certainty and better integration of local knowledge in disaster preparedness and recovery frameworks.
- Local government jobs and skills – where attendees highlighted key issues attracting workers to the regions, promoting council careers to young values-led workers, better access to local training, cost-shifting concerns, migrant workforce support, and housing shortages as a major staffing barrier.
- Safer roads - discussed infrastructure funding and general maintenance, speed management, driver behaviour, and the broader questions of regional vs urban specific problems.

Motions and Assembly Outcomes

- Almost 190 motions were debated across a range of policy areas including financial sustainability, roads, disaster resilience, health, housing, and climate. Motions passed by the NGA will be referred to relevant Ministers for response and also used by the ALGA Board to inform national policy positions.