



**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT
MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

MC24-003398

Councillor Linda Scott
President
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Dear Councillor *Linda*

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 September 2024 concerning resolutions from the 2024 National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government.

I have considered the resolutions that were identified as relevant to the Australian Government's employment and workplace relations portfolio that were agreed to by councils at the 2024 NGA of Local Government:

- Motion number 25 proposes that the Australian Government implement remuneration requirements for all elected local government representatives.
- Motion number 158 proposes that the Australian Government take pro-active steps to identify the requirements to create a nationally consistent approach to provide equal rights for elected local government representatives in relation to psychosocial safety legislation and workplace health and safety.

I have responded to each of these resolutions at **Attachment A**.

I have copied this letter to the Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories.

Thank you again for writing to me about these important local government issues.

Yours sincerely

MURRAY WATT

28/10 /2024

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Attachment A: Minister Watt response to 2024 LGA of Local Government resolutions for the employment and workplace relations portfolio

Resolution	Minister Watt response
Motion number 25 Murray River Council NSW This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to implement remuneration requirements of Elected Members: a) to be even across all states and across all council categories of councils (metropolitan, regional rural etc.); and b) they be set at a level that enables elected members devote a substantial amount of time (at least ½ FTE) to undertake council matters.	The regulation of elected members of local government, including matters relating to their remuneration, is a matter for state and territory governments. You may wish to contact your relevant state or territory government body in relation to this matter.
Motion number 158 Noosa Council QLD This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government in establishing pro-active steps to identify the core elements required to create a strategic, collaborative and consistent national approach and potentially policy changes in providing equal rights for elected representatives in relation to psychosocial safety legislation and workplace health and safety.	In Australia, work health and safety (WHS) laws are largely harmonised across jurisdictions through a set of uniform laws known as model WHS laws. The model WHS laws provide for a balanced and nationally consistent framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces. The framework adopts a three-tiered approach made up of the model WHS Act, model WHS regulations and model Codes of Practice. These model WHS laws are developed and administered by an independent statutory body, Safe Work Australia (SWA), through a tripartite process involving all jurisdictions as well as employer and worker representatives. For the model WHS laws to be legally binding they must be adopted by each jurisdiction as their own laws. All jurisdictions other than Victoria have adopted the model WHS laws, although Victoria has similar duties and responsibilities under its <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i>. Under the model WHS laws a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), such as an employer, has a duty to ensure the health and safety of workers and other people in the workplace so far as reasonably practicable. This duty extends to managing the physical and psychosocial hazards within the workplace. Psychosocial hazards are: