ALGA
Australian Local Government Association

Investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation

Response to the Productivity Commission's Interim Report

September 2025

About ALGA

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the voice of local government in Australia, representing 537 councils across the nation.

ALGA is a federation of all state and territory local government associations.

ALGA was established in 1947 and throughout its history has been actively involved in issues of national significance affecting local government and local communities.

ALGA welcomes the opportunity to discuss practical opportunities for partnership to rapidly mitigate our emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

Over 1300 local government delegates attend ALGA's National General Assembly in 2025 to discuss local solutions to national priorities, including climate change and net zero transition.

A note on the Terms of Reference

Governments have limited resources and need to make their money go far. Receiving only 0.5% of national taxation revenue, local governments are well acquainted with this operating environment. **But it's important to see the bigger picture of net zero.**

Beyond just cutting emissions, investing wisely can strengthen the local governments that are the bedrock for community resilience, enable future industry and prosperous communities, and better protect our natural and social systems. These are the things that maintain the nation's fiscal, social and environmental sustainability in an uncertain future.

If we aim only for the lowest cost route to decarbonisation without accompanying strategic investments that seize opportunities, we risk missing out on these considerable benefits.

We hope that the scope and final recommendations for this important Inquiry will take a holistic and systemic lens, suggesting the investments – as well as the no- and low-cost measures – that will deliver exceptional return on investment for Australians through the opportunity of net zero.

Response to draft recommendations

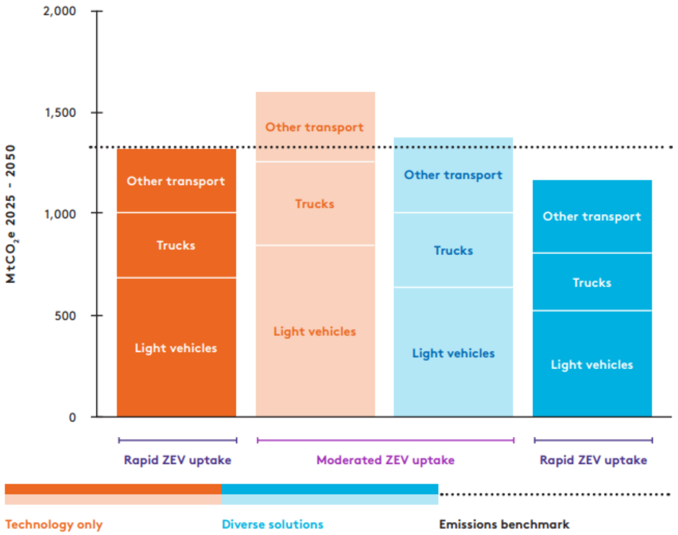
1. Reducing the cost of meeting emissions targets	1.1 Reducing emissions in the electricity sector after 2030	⊖	NA – less relevant to local government
	1.2 The Safeguard Mechanism should cover more industrial facilities and carbon leakage provisions should be improved	⚠	The Australian Government should review all measures influencing landfill emissions reduction. Supports must be available to assist councils to meet any new obligations.
	1.3 Introduce an emissions-reduction incentive for heavy vehicles and phase-out policy overlaps for light vehicles	✓	ALGA supports decarbonisation of heavy freight. However, care must be taken to ensure that regional councils, communities and economies are protected and that higher road maintenance costs from heavier vehicles are recovered to councils.
	1.4 Apply frameworks to achieve emissions targets at least cost and improve transparency	⊖	NA – less relevant to local government
2. Speeding up approvals for new energy infrastructure	2.1 Reform national environment laws	✓	ALGA supports *EPBC Act* reform to harmonise protections, give clarity for users, and embed regional planning for clear renewables development pathways.
	2.2 Set up a specialist 'strike team' for priority projects	⚠	A Coordinator-General and 'strike team' could streamline processes across levels of government which is welcomed. ALGA cautions that any 'strike team' needs to acknowledge and work with local government to ensure the views of communities hosting transition on behalf of the nation are heard.
	2.3 Establish a Coordinator-General for priority projects	⚠	
	2.4 Consider the energy transition in approval decisions	✗	ALGA is concerned about establishing a precedent for industries receiving particular consideration through ministerial decision making. ALGA proposes including energy transition in an appropriate national environmental standard so assessments are made on a consistent basis.
3. Addressing barriers to private investment in adaptation	3.1 Set up a climate risk information database covering all climate hazards	✓	ALGA supports information and data provision that enables councils to assess risk at all relevant scales, from asset to strategic/LGA level.
	3.2 Develop a nationally consistent climate resilience rating system for housing	⚠	ALGA supports assured risk information to enable informed decision making in the market. However, additional supports – including via local government delivery – are required for citizens who are not able to respond to a price or information signal.
	3.3 Governments should agree on a series of actions to improve housing resilience over time	✓	ALGA welcomes the call to involve local government in long term decision making about housing provision and enablement on a national scale.
	3.4 Give the Climate Change Authority responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and learning regarding adaptation policy	✓	ALGA sees urgent need to understand effectiveness and outcomes of adaptation interventions to identify gaps, needs and improve decision making.

Legend ✓ Support ✗ Oppose ⚠ Support/opposition contingent on implementation approach ⊖ No position

1: Reducing the cost of meeting emissions targets

- ALGA has been pleased to see the Productivity Commission (PC) interrogate critical gaps which are slowing or distorting the pathway for decarbonisation across our largest emitting sectors.
- In focusing on transport emissions, ALGA urges the PC to broaden its perspective to the whole transport hierarchy. The Interim Report only covers mode switch through focusing on electric vehicle uptake.
- ClimateWorks (2024) modelling shows that focusing on EVs alone is not an effective pathway to meeting our emissions reduction goals.
- It also misses significant opportunities for health benefits and to address socio-economic disparities, including transport poverty, which arise from overreliance on private vehicles.

This Inquiry, and new policies and funding, must include recommendations and measures for public and active transport mainstream options if they are to succeed in meeting the Australian Government's emissions reduction target in transport.



Note: Emissions figures include scope 1 and 2 emissions but not scope 3. Emissions from 'other transport' include rail, shipping, domestic aviation and buses.

"While EV uptake has a critical role to play, focusing solely on EVs underestimates the impact other transport related interventions can have. Diversifying options can help Australia reach net zero in line with a 1.5°C future and improve transport outcomes." ClimateWorks 2024 (figure left).

"Queensland Government found that delivery of 550km of its highest priority cycle network routes will result in a return of almost $5 in economic benefit for every $1 invested." Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads 2019

Per ALGA's submission on the Net Zero Transport Consultation Roadmap (2024), *the Commonwealth should:*

- Commit to its proposed national policy framework for active and public transport.
- Invest more in active travel and public transport, including through the Active Transport Fund. Local government needs an investment plan over the time horizons specified in the Consultation Roadmap so they can deliver at scale and pace.
- The objectives and actions of the Built Environment and Energy Net Zero Sector Plans should be incorporated into the Active and Public Transport Framework.
- Revise the National Electric Vehicle Strategy to acknowledge and resource local governments as delivery partners.

In respect to decarbonising heavy freight, implementation of lower-emissions technologies and standards will be enabled by acknowledging the costs to local governments and funding them commensurately.

Incentivising lower-emitting vehicles for heavy freight requires Australian adoption the UN 'Euro VI emission standard.' Adoption of this standard means vehicles will be larger and heavier even before fully electric heavy vehicles are considered. Councils will have to resurface local roads significantly earlier than anticipated, with an estimated 50% increase in maintenance spending required. Local governments manage 75% of Australia's roads, so changes to road maintenance of this magnitude would have significant impact on council budgets. **Proper funding is essential to maintain public support for transport decarbonisation and avoid road damage costs falling on local ratepayers.**

The rollout of the National Automated Access System (NAAS) will deliver a clearer understanding of freight and heavy vehicle movements and will help land and transport planners identify where efficiencies in the freight network can be made. The Commonwealth should expedite the rollout of the NAAS, focussing on local government's access to data, working with them to identify and upgrade key freight routes while seeking opportunities to lower Vehicle Kilometres Travelled and enabling a multi-modal freight network.

Aviation is a sector of concern given the immaturity of low carbon liquid fuels and the criticality of aviation to Australia's economy and our society. This is particularly acute for rural, regional and remote communities which are reliant on aviation for connectivity to urban centres for essential service provision and goods. Any subsequent changes to aviation must consider the repercussions for communities which rely on the industry.

1: Reducing the cost of meeting emissions targets (cont.)

1.1 Reducing emissions in the electricity sector after 2030

No position on proposals. In principle comments:

- Local governments support consistent incentives which produce the smoothest possible transition into a renewable energy economy. Stable energy supply through the transition is critical.
- Local governments are supporting local energy stability through, for example, facilitating micro-grid and community battery projects, local virtual energy networks, and electrifying their own assets.
- National energy market rules and policies should incentivise local government renewable energy projects through financial return.

1.2 The Safeguard Mechanism should cover more industrial facilities and carbon leakage provisions should be improved

Lowering of the Safeguard Mechanism threshold would likely capture council landfills. As noted by DCCEEW in 2023, landfills provide a service to the Australian community, rather than produce an output and should therefore be afforded special consideration under the Safeguard Mechanism.

A systematic review should be undertaken to identify all Commonwealth, state, and territory regulations and instruments which influence landfill emissions and reduction obligations to ensure emissions are not ‘double counted,’ and that instruments send consistent and coherent instruction for implementation by councils. Any ACCU Scheme reviews (e.g. landfill gas method) must ensure account for the success of existing settings based on demonstrated emissions reductions from council processes and assets. These should continue to be incentivised.

Any identified reductions required should be met through comprehensive financial and policy supports so councils do not bear an unfair and inequitable burden. For example, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation could extend its financing to any council landfills that may be captured.

1.3 Introduce an emissions-reduction incentive for heavy vehicles and phase-out policy overlaps for light vehicles

ALGA supports this initiative, but stresses the importance of enablers, including addressing the impacts of heavier vehicles on the road network, and the infrastructure requirements surrounding vehicle charging, and low-carbon fuel distribution.

1.4 Apply frameworks to achieve emissions targets at least cost and improve transparency

No position.

2: Speeding up approvals for new energy infrastructure

Local government is a delivery partner for energy transition

Local governments play a vital role in community development and prosperity. They build relationships, elicit the community's vision and desires and turn it into reality through strategic planning, and deliver essential infrastructure and services that enable local economies to prosper. **These roles are critical in achieving net zero transition.**

Where they have the resources to do so, local governments are uniquely positioned to take their communities on the journey of what can be achieved by hosting projects, while understanding and working through complex discussions about barriers, problems and people's concerns.

When engaged as knowledgeable and influential partners, local governments can:

- Strengthen public understanding of the energy transition.
- Provide key perspectives, or co-design strategies that reflect community expectations.
- Ensure that short, medium, and long-term impacts are addressed transparently.
- Support ongoing partnerships with energy infrastructure owners, reinforcing social license and community value.

The net zero transition can be a constructive process that delivers real outcomes for the communities and support a smoother, faster and more inclusive renewables rollout on a national scale.

Streamlining is important but cannot come at the expense of local government roles in planning, providing advice to renewable energy proponents and other levels of government, and engaging their communities. This should be accounted for in respect to any proposed Coordinator-General or 'strike team.'

The Commonwealth, in collaboration with state and territory governments and the private sector should:

- **Recognise local government as a key enabling partner in the renewables transition.** Councils should be a first port of call for renewables projects, as they provide advice which helps developers delivering good outcomes in each community.
- **Develop regional renewables transition plans that leverage council's insights, functions and authority as strategic connectors**. Councils should be explicitly positioned as co-authors. Regional plans should include council's integrated planning and reporting work to avoid duplication and ensure energy transition serves long-term local goals and needs to back in social license. Plans should make development pathways clear, connect renewables transition with other opportunities in circular economy, green industry and environmental protection.
- **Councils, or regions of councils, should receive capacity support funding to help them keep up with the pace and scale of renewables transition**. Planning, compliance and community engagement, are examples of areas this funding could scale up.
- Local governments have developed guides, frameworks and know how, and they are most enthusiastic to engage with one another to learn. The Commonwealth should **fund a knowledge sharing program to bring councils together to share knowledge, resources and know how.**
- Streamline the multitude of voluntary guides and **establish a national minimum engagement and conduct standard** for industry that sets out a mechanism for assessing unacceptably poor practice.
- A related **mechanism for cost recovery** should be established where demonstrably poor engagement leads to degradation of social license that councils must rectify. While the Developer Rating Scheme will be a useful step, enforceable penalties are required.
- ALGA supports the Productivity Commission's proposal for **better, more consistent and transparent data**. ALGA calls for a national map demonstrating zoning for prospective and proposed renewable energy projects and transmission corridors, which can also accommodate local knowledge and information prepared by councils for integrated planning and reporting purposes.
- Establish a **mandatory product stewardship scheme** for end-of-life renewables infrastructure.

2: Speeding up approvals for new energy infrastructure (cont.)

2.1 Reform national environment laws

ALGA supports EPBC Act reform to harmonise protections and to enable regional planning at scale. Reforms should harmonise Commonwealth and state/territory environmental protection regulations to make them more straight forward to implement by local governments. Harmonisation should include, for example, alignment on threatened species listing and definitions and clear regional planning.

A new regional planning standard should specify that local government integrated planning and reporting work be included to avoid duplication of effort and that local values and needs are incorporated.

2.2 Set up a specialist 'strike team' for priority projects

A 'strike team' could streamline processes across levels of government, including incorporating local government insights on critical local factors and cumulative impacts which can have a defining impact on the success of a renewable energy project. This team could also monitor gaps, tensions and inconsistencies in renewables planning across the federation to reduce the drag this presents to developers, local governments and NFPs.

However, ALGA cautions that any 'strike team' needs to acknowledge and work with local government to ensure the views of communities hosting transition on behalf of the nation are heard. Local governments are democratically elected, and hold long-term stewardship for their communities.

2.3 Establish a Coordinator-General for priority projects

A Coordinator-General could streamline processes across levels of government, including incorporating local government insights on critical local factors and cumulative impacts which can have a defining impact on the success of a renewable energy project.

As for Recommendation 2.2, ALGA cautions that a Coordinator-General needs to acknowledge and work with local government.

2.4 Consider the energy transition in approval decisions

The objective of national environmental laws is to protect our national environmental values into perpetuity. ALGA is concerned that introducing special consideration for energy transition establishes a damaging precedent for the potential weakening of protections for Australia's natural heritage.

Should a 'fast track' or different criteria for energy transition be written into environmental assessment, ALGA proposes inclusion of robust criteria for decision making in a relevant environmental standard. There should be appropriate public discussion about the terms on which environmental protections can be bypassed, for what purpose, and for what collective risks and benefits.

3: Addressing barriers to private investment in adaptation

Nationally significant contribution of councils to adaptation

- Australia's councils are at the frontline of climate adaptation. The climate of every community is different, and each council knows what their community needs to prepare and adapt.
- Modelling undertaken in ALGA's *Adapting Together* (2025) demonstrates that through their climate adaptation initiatives, councils are already delivering **at least $0.8 and $3.1 per $1 of investment.**
- When modelled at the national scale, continued local government spending on adaptation at these levels would equate to at least $400 million per year, or **$2 billion invested in the 5 years to 2030**. This $2 billion investment is estimated to benefit local communities by between **$2.2 and $4.7 billion**.
- The adaptation work that councils do directly reduces the pressure on budgets for other governments. For example, many councils are investing in solutions to reduce head stress on their residents which reduces the pressure on our hospital system across the nation.

Scaling up systemic resilience with local government partnership

ALGA calls for a dedicated local government Adaptation Fund of $400 million per year, distributed on a formula basis to all councils, to reduce climate risk systematically across the country.

Analysis of over 200 council climate initiatives for *Adapting* Together shows that a significant proportion of local governments have already completed climate risk assessments and adaptation plans, which are robust bases for prioritising what needs to be implemented in a contextually responsive way.

Local government role in underpinning private investment in adaptation

- **Systemic resilience engenders confidence for private investment.** As the nation's largest assets and infrastructure manager and service delivery provider, the more than councils are enabled to manage climate risks, the better systemic resilience will be.
- **Resilience cannot be achieved by focusing on climate risk and housing alone.** As the Investor Group for Climate Change (2024) showed, systemic resilience makes Australia a more attractive place for private capital to invest – helping to stem capital flight that's already occurring (i.e. insurance unaffordability) and withdrawal in future as climate risks increase.

Case study	Category of action (see typology in report)	Dollar benefits per dollar of cost	Key public benefits
City of Darwin (NT): Urban Cooling	Physical and technological measures	$1.3 - $3.1 benefit per $1 cost	health and wellbeing, ecosystem services, recreation and amenity
Lockyer Valley Regional Council (Qld): Flood Management	Economic and financial measures	$1.0 - $1.5 benefit per $1 cost	avoided property damage, health and wellbeing, avoided emergency response costs
City of Hobart (Tas): Bushfire Resilience	Knowledge-based, behavioural and cultural change measures	$0.8 - $1.6 benefit per $1 cost	health and wellbeing, avoided property damage, avoided emergency response costs, ecosystem services
Moyne Shire Council (Vic): Coastal Hazard Management	Regulatory measures	$1.2 - $2.7 benefit per $1 cost	health and wellbeing, avoided property damage, avoided emergency response costs
Buloke Shire Council (Vic): Urban Cooling	Physical and technological measures	$1.1 - $2.5 benefit per $1 cost	health and wellbeing, ecosystem services

health and wellbeing · ecosystem services · recreation and amenity · avoided property damage · avoided emergency response costs

System of national importance	Examples of council contributions	Examples of national benefits
Health and social support system	Providing safe community facilities where people can connect, seek relief and access services.	• Reduces demand on Australian Government and state/territory-funded healthcare and other support mechanisms (eg. Jobseeker) • Reduces underlying community vulnerability to disaster events.
Infrastructure and built environment	Delivering and managing a significant proportion of Australia's critical infrastructure.	• Quality local roads and drainage improves flood resilience and reduce requests for support under Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).
Natural environment	Protecting and enhancing natural and culturally significant spaces to support human and ecological health outcomes.	• Protecting Matters of National Environmental Significance. • Supports healthier, more disaster resilient communities.
Defence and national security	Delivering social and community development programs, as well as local emergency response and recovery.	• Social cohesion reduces underlying drivers of violent extremism. • Strong local emergency management reduces demands on Australian Government and Australian Defence Force.

Local government adaptation is an investment that delivers net social, economic and environmental benefits. Their work is critical for the resilience of all systems of national importance in the NCRA. ***It needs support to keep delivering.***

3: Addressing barriers to private investment in adaptation (cont.)

Careful approach to twin challenges of housing and climate

- Communities face the twin challenges of housing scarcity and unaffordability, and increasing hazard risk to existing housing stock which is being exacerbated by climate change.
- To ensure that there is a coherent policy and investment approach to housing and climate risk, ALGA urges the PC to align any recommendations with findings in the forthcoming National Climate Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Plan.

Enabling local government to reduce climate risks to housing

- Local government has key roles in supporting both planned and managed retreat from climate hazards. Planned retreat is proactive policy and planning to avoid homes being built in high-risk areas, while managed retreat is the coordinated and systematic relocation of existing homes from dangerous locations.
- These are not only through land use planning, but importantly, in **stewarding contextually-appropriate community discussions about who, when, and how retreat be undertaken so that it is ultimately successful.**
- They also locate retreat in the broader context of the changes needed for community and enabling infrastructure, such as stormwater systems, roads and active transport routes, parks and public spaces, and more.
- ALGA's *Adapting Together* report found that councils deliver net benefits through their retreat policies and investments – despite being in different communities and facing different hazards (see next page for case studies):

Case study	Category of action (see typology in report)	Dollar benefits per dollar of cost	Key public benefits
Lockyer Valley Regional Council (Qld): Flood Management	Economic and financial measures	$1.0 - $1.5 benefit per $1 cost	
Moyne Shire Council (Vic): Coastal Hazard Management	Regulatory measures	$1.2 - $2.7 benefit per $1 cost	

health and wellbeing · ecosystem services · recreation and amenity · avoided property damage · avoided emergency response costs

The Commonwealth should:

Recognise councils as delivery partners in adaptation

- Make ALGA a full member of National Cabinet and the Housing and Homelessness Ministerial Council. In liaison with the Energy and Climate Ministers Meeting (to which ALGA is an observer), these are appropriate forums for all levels of government to collaborate and plan for the intersection of climate risk and housing.
- Establish a dedicated local government Adaptation Fund of $400 million per year, distributed on a formula basis to all councils, to reduce climate risk systematically across the country.
- Acknowledge that planning to incorporate climate hazard risks into housing and community infrastructure is sensitive and can be highly political. It requires a collaborative approach across government to inform community expectations about how our cities, towns and homes will likely change.
- The Hazard Insurance Partnership should be expanded to consider how local government and homeowner insurance premiums can be reduced through collaborative risk reduction and upgrading the resilience of critical infrastructure they're responsible for.

Give councils nationally consistent tools

- Streamline and make it easier for local governments to undertake climate risk management. This should involve implementing a voluntary climate risk framework for local government which supports consistent climate risk assessment, reporting, decision making and expenditure.
- Develop, operate and maintain an information and data suite designed specifically for local government adaptation use (on an opt-in basis).
- With state and territory governments, establish harmonised guidance and standards (e.g. which climate scenarios to use) so councils can implement climate-risk informed planning consistently across Local Government Areas.
- Enable infrastructure betterment by aligning regulations, standards and funding, so that enabling and supporting infrastructure for housing is fit for the realities of a changed climate.

3: Addressing barriers to private investment in adaptation (cont.)

Case studies of local government initiatives which reduce risk to households

Lockyer Valley Regional Council – Voluntary Home Buy-Back Program to mitigate exposure to flood

After flooding events in 2022, the Australian and Queensland Governments announced a joint initiative to help people living in Queensland recover and become more resilient to future flooding events. The initiative included the Voluntary Home Buy-Back (VHBB) Program. Lockyer Valley took part the in VHBB Program and purchased 24 properties across the Lockyer Valley region that met the Voluntary Home Buy Back assessment criteria. These properties were in highly vulnerable locations that are susceptible to extreme flooding risk. Of the 24 properties purchased, 19 were demolished and five were removed. The buyback program permanently reduced flood risk exposure for participating properties and the wider community. It also enabled the restoration of natural floodplain functions, contributing to broader environmental resilience.

Outcomes and benefits quantified in this case study

- Fewer residential properties affected by flood events
- Avoided property damage and clean-up costs
- Avoided emergency response costs
- Avoided fatality and healthcare costs including mental health costs
- Avoided loss of social wellbeing and mental health costs due to flood events

Key findings

For every **$1** spent on the Voluntary Home Buy-Back Scheme, the local community are estimated to receive between **$0.8 and $1.3** in quantified benefits, of which:
47% are from avoided residential property damage costs incurred including clean up and emergency response
53% are from avoided fatalities, injuries and metal health costs and social wellbeing impacts.

These are **conservative estimates** of the full range of benefits provided by this program, as they do not include significant other intangible benefits including wellbeing and avoided risks for emergency responders and environmental benefits from reclaimed land. In addition, not all expected impacts of climate change could be accounted for, as climate change scenarios were only incorporated in 1-in-100 year flood events, so the impacts of more frequent events of other sizes were not captured.

Broader insights for this type of local adaptation

The value of this action strongly depends on selecting the right properties for removal. Lockyer Valley's detailed flood mapping was instrumental in this. Without high quality flood mapping to inform the property buybacks, the benefits would likely have been lower as appropriate properties may not have been prioritised. Lockyer Valley also has effective flood planning and preparation measures in place, with an effective warning system that reduces the risks to lives and wellbeing. In other locations with less effective warning systems, the benefits of a property buyback program may be even higher, as the risks to health and wellbeing are more significant without effective warning systems.

Moyne Shire Council – Planning Amendment C69 to mitigate coastal hazard risk

Moyne Shire Council introduced a planning amendment in Port Fairy to prevent new development in areas projected to be inundated by sea level rise, as part of its Coastal Hazard Management Plan. This forward-looking policy represents a proactive local government approach to long-term climate risk management. The town of Port Fairy is low-lying and therefore at risk from both riverine flooding and coastal inundation, with climate change resulting in rising threats from coastal erosion, storm surges and sea level rise. Moyne Shire has amended its local planning regulations (Amendment C69) to ensure future development and land use in Port Fairy are climate-resilient – protecting lives, property, and the town's cultural and environmental values.

Outcomes and benefits quantified in this case study

- Fewer residential properties affected by flood events
- Avoided property damage and clean-up costs
- Avoided emergency response costs
- Avoided fatality and healthcare costs including mental health costs
- Avoided loss of social wellbeing and mental health costs due to flood events

Key findings

For every **$1** spent on the updates to the planning scheme, the local community will receive between **$1.2 and $2.9** in quantified benefits over 30 years, of which:
90% are from avoided residential property damage costs incurred including clean up and emergency response
10% are from avoided fatalities, injuries and metal health costs and social wellbeing impacts.

These are conservative estimates of the full range of benefits provided by this program. The quantified benefits do not include significant other intangible benefits, including avoided risks to wellbeing of emergency responders, avoided disruption to tourism and other businesses, and avoided environmental costs from use of hard coastal protection measures such as sea walls. Under lower discount rates the benefits are greater than the costs, as benefits are accrued over a long period compared to relatively high upfront costs.

Broader insights for this type of local adaptation

This case study demonstrates the value of proactive land-use planning as a cost-effective measure to manage climate risks. Early action avoids future costs that would be borne directly by communities, and increases overall community resilience. The benefits of this case study would be significantly higher if sea level rises more rapidly than expected, or if a major flood event occurs.

3: Addressing barriers to private investment in adaptation (cont.)

3.1 Set up a climate risk information database covering all hazards

ALGA supports information and data provision that enables councils to assess risk at all relevant scales, from asset to strategic/LGA level. This includes nationally consistent hazard risk data at asset/lot level, through to financial information that helps executives to incorporate adaptation into budgeting and reporting.

Any new database must add value to existing services at Commonwealth, state and territory level. For example, a National Natural Hazards Disaster Risk Profile is being developed by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

3.2 Develop a nationally consistent climate resilience rating system for housing

ALGA supports assured risk information to enable informed decision making in the market. The PC should stipulate how the scheme should be used by insurers to reduce premiums. However, additional supports are required for citizens who cannot respond to a price or information signal to ensure that inequitable outcomes are not exacerbated in the existing housing crisis.

Advice from an independent panel to the New Zealand Government has suggested phasing out property buy-backs and following a ‘beneficiary pays’ model. This advice has been widely criticised as abdicating the responsibility of government to protect citizens. It provides a cautionary tale in respect to overreliance on price signals and placing the onus for risk reduction on individuals.

3.3 Governments should agree on a series of actions to improve housing resilience over time

ALGA welcomes the call to involve local government in long term decision making about housing provision and enablement on a national scale. ALGA is seeking a seat at the table for national discussions on housing policy, including full membership of National Cabinet and the Housing and Homelessness Ministerial Council.

In many jurisdictions, local government performs a key role in zoning and approving housing and delivering and maintaining enabling infrastructure. Councils are incorporating climate hazard risks into their land use planning, but need the support of Commonwealth and state governments to do so sector wide.

3.4 Give the Climate Change Authority responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and learning regarding adaptation policy

ALGA sees urgent need to understand effectiveness and outcomes of adaptation interventions to identify gaps, needs and improve decision making.
However, it is important to account for how scale, i.e. local values and outcomes, are represented the approach to assessing effectiveness.

Some state governments have embarked on designing and implementing monitoring and evaluation frameworks for climate adaptation, however, there is little evidence that local-level and local government metrics and outcomes are incorporated in these efforts. A truly national approach to understanding adaptation outcomes, learning and improvement must take a joined-up approach that ensures proper granularity at local to national scale.

Building Better Communities.

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