



The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

Minister For Employment and Workplace Relations

MC25-002751

Councillor Matt Burnett
Mayor
Australian Local Government Association
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Dear Mayor

Thank you for your correspondence dated 14 August 2025, concerning the resolutions from the 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government. I appreciate the opportunity to engage with the issues raised by councils across Australia and acknowledge the important role local government plays in shaping policy outcomes that reflect community needs.

Please find below responses to the motions that fall within my responsibilities as Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.

Motion 107

The Australian Government recognises the benefit of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme to regional and remote Australian prosperity and the role local councils play in supporting the communities that host them. Local councils are recognised as important stakeholders for the PALM scheme to assist to build situational awareness of how to improve outcomes for workers, employers and host communities.

I am advised that officials from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, met with mayors and senior council staff in New South Wales and Queensland in June and August 2025 as part of the PALM scheme Local Government Strategy, including Leeton Shire Council. These meetings were a productive opportunity to discuss program settings, and each council acknowledged the importance that the PALM scheme played in their local government areas.

The department has also established the Community Connections program which is a community development initiative that focuses on establishing local networks, facilitating events, information sharing and mobilising supports to assist workers to live and work in their host communities. This is a program open to communities and workers actively engaged in the PALM scheme.

Workers who have disengaged from the PALM scheme no longer have access to the protections of the program and can be vulnerable to exploitation. PALM scheme worker disengagement is a priority for the government, and an Interdepartmental Disengagement Taskforce is currently underway to identify strategies to better prevent, deter, detect and respond to disengagement. Support mechanisms are available to disengaged workers, including the potential for re-engagement or re-employment within the PALM scheme.

I also understand that the department is committed to increasing its regional presence and supporting relationships with key stakeholders such as local councils for improved PALM scheme outcomes.

Motion 128

The government is committed to better wages, secure jobs and a fairer workplace relations system for all Australian workers. Recent government reforms have put gender equality and job security at the heart of the workplace relations system, to ensure work in female-dominated industries, such as early childhood education and care and aged care, is properly valued.

As a result of the government's workplace relations reforms, the Fair Work Commission (the Commission) is currently considering how to address gender undervaluation across several care sector awards and occupations. This includes changes to the Children's Services Award 2020 and the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010. The government is committed to engaging positively with the Commission to address its findings of gender undervaluation.

Motions 110, 111, 114, 122 and 128.2

The matters raised in these motions fall outside my portfolio responsibilities. These will be addressed by the relevant ministers.

Thank you again for forwarding these resolutions. I appreciate the continued engagement of local government in shaping national policy and look forward to ongoing collaboration.

Yours sincerely



Amanda Rishworth MP

22 / 10 / 2025