



**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER**

MC25-008631

Mayor Matt Burnett
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Australian Local Government Association
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Dear Mayor ~~Burnett~~

Matt

Thank you for your letter of 13 August 2025 concerning resolutions from the 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government.

Local Governments work tirelessly to serve communities across Australia and the advice that you provide to the Australian Government is invaluable. I am pleased to say that the Australian Government is already acting on many of the matters raised by the National General Assembly. This letter sets out my responses to resolutions within the scope of my responsibilities.

Motion 25

The Australian Government has committed \$37.4 million to 26 projects nationwide through the Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund, aimed at expanding organics recycling infrastructure and diverting over 1 million tonnes of organic waste annually from landfill. The Fund supports the circular economy by promoting the transformation of food and garden organics into high-quality composts that enhance soil health, reduce emissions, and lower reliance on chemical fertilisers.

Motion 26

The Australian Government is investigating options to increase solar panel recycling and reduce waste. The government is regularly engaging with the solar photovoltaic industry to identify recycling issues and opportunities and will consult publicly as this work progresses.

At the most recent Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (ECMC) meeting, the issue of solar panel and battery waste was acknowledged by all jurisdictions with the outcome an agreement that the Commonwealth will work with New South Wales and others states to investigate different models for a national product stewardship scheme and to evaluate both Commonwealth and state-based approaches.

Motion 32

My department has banned three groups of PFAS (over 500 related chemicals), effective 1 July 2025. The department expects to make standards under the Industrial Chemicals Environmental Managements Standard (IChEMS) for a further 12 PFAS in the 2025–26 financial year.

Motion 33

The Australian Government is investing over \$600 million to better protect our threatened plants and animals and tackle the feral animals and weeds devastating our native species through programs such as Saving Native Species, the Natural Heritage Trust and National Environmental Science Program.

The Saving Native Species (SNS) Program provides funding to enable the recovery of all Threatened Species and Ecological Communities, and to support on-ground actions to track and inform priorities to support nationwide biodiversity.

There are no new SNS program opportunities available to Local Government Associations (LGAs). LGAs were eligible to apply for competitive grants and also feature as beneficiaries of the program in other ways, both directly and indirectly, through directed commitments such as:

- yellow crazy ant control in the Townsville LGA to protect World Heritage values (\$12.8 million)
- the construction of the Toohey Forest fauna crossing in the Brisbane LGA (\$3 million)
- investment in several wildlife care hospitals as part of the Saving Koalas Fund (funded by the SNS program).

In addition, several LGAs were awarded competitive grants and/or feature as partners to grants awarded under the SNS program.

Motion 34

The Local Environmental Projects Program (2025–28) supports the Australian Government's 2025 election commitment to protect and enhance the environment and heritage nationwide. 16 local governments will receive \$19.4 million to deliver 19 projects focused on restoring threatened species and habitats, enhancing coasts and waterways, and improving community access to urban green and blue spaces.

Motion 35

The Australian Government is working with state and territory governments to harmonise the phase out of problematic and unnecessary plastics, including single use plastics. In December 2024, Environment Ministers agreed to release a summary of the *National Roadmap: Harmonising action on problematic and unnecessary plastics*. State and territory governments are also working to ban loose fill and moulded expanded polystyrene (EPS) packaging and EPS food service-ware.

Product stewardship schemes play an important role in producers taking greater responsibility for the lifecycle of plastic products. The work underway, for example, through the newly established Soft Plastics Stewardship Australia is an important step in increasing recycling rates for soft plastics. The Australian Government is also reforming the national regulation of packing to ensure it is designed to be recovered, reused, recycled and reprocessed safely, in line with circular economy principles to reduce its environmental impacts.

Through the Recycling Modernisation Fund, the Australian Government has invested over \$250 million to expand recycling infrastructure, including for plastics. The government is also supporting market development through initiatives like the ReMade in Australia scheme to boost demand for recycled materials.

Motion 36

Container deposit schemes provide a financial incentive to consumers to return containers, which keeps litter out of the natural environment, and provides an ongoing source of higher value materials for reprocessing into new products.

While the Australian Government does not operate a container deposit scheme, the government supports the schemes now established across all states and territories as a highly effective mechanism to increase resource recovery. The Australian Government and state and territory governments are working together to harmonise the schemes through the Environment Ministers' Meeting forum. Work is underway to harmonise container types, with a focus on the proposed inclusion of wine and spirit containers. This project is considering beverage containers only. Additional consultation and analysis would be required before a decision is taken to further expand to other packaging types. Amending the scope of eligible containers will be a decision for each state and territory government, informed by extensive stakeholder consultation.

Thank you again for writing on these matters. I understand that copies of your motions relevant to my colleagues' areas of responsibility were provided to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, the Hon Kristy McBain MP and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Julie Collins MP. I have copied this letter to those ministers and refer you to them for responses to resolutions within the scope of their responsibilities.

Yours sincerely



MURRAY WATT

25 / 9 / 2025

cc: Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon Chris Bowen MP
Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories,
the Hon Kristy McBain MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Julie Collins MP