



THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP
MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

Response to 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government resolutions

Motion number 20, Strathfield Council NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to commit to long-term, sustainable funding for local government community services, including seniors, disability and youth programs.

The Australian Government has substantially increased funding to community services, including through the funding supplementation package to the sector announced in the 2022-23 Budget worth an additional \$560 million and the improvement of indexation arrangements announced in the 2023-24 Budget, which will deliver more than \$4 billion in additional funding compared to previous arrangements over its first four years.

The Government also released the Community Sector Grants Engagement Framework (the Framework) in March 2025. The Framework aims to strengthen the way grants are administered by moving to longer grant agreements, reducing administrative burden, improving flexibility and focusing more on outcomes. Further information about the Framework is available at www.dss.gov.au/strengthening-community-sector/resource/community-sector-grants-engagement-framework.

Motion number 53, Shoalhaven City Council NSW

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide adequate financial assistance, via Services Australia, to eligible ratepayers (Pension and Low-Income earners) to assist with payments of council and water rates.

Financial assistance should be provided at an amount, or percentage, that reflects current level of rates and should be delivered via a more efficient and cost-effective mechanism, than is currently used.

The Australian Government is committed to a social security system that supports the most vulnerable and is sustainable for future generations.

Social security payment rates and thresholds are indexed regularly to maintain their value over time.

Pensions are indexed twice a year, on 20 March and 20 September. On 20 September 2025, the maximum total rate will rise by \$29.70 a fortnight for singles and \$44.80 for couples.

In the 12 months to September 2025, base pension rates have grown by 3.1 per cent, compared to a 1.9 per cent growth in Consumer Price Index in the relevant reference period. This means pensions have grown above the average rate of inflation. The maximum annual amount of single pension has increased by nearly \$5,000 since the Albanese Government was elected in March 2022.

People receiving JobSeeker, ABSTUDY and Parenting Payment will also see an increase to their payment on 20 September 2025.

Further, the Government has delivered an almost 50 per cent increase in Commonwealth Rent Assistance, the largest in 30 years.

These payments are in addition to the Government's freeze on the price of medicines, energy bill assistance, expanded child care subsidy, student debt reductions and other cost-of-living measures delivered by the Government.

The Government issues Pensioner Concession Cards and has expanded access to the Seniors Health Card, both of which provide access to cheaper medicines and more bulk-billed medical appointments. These cards can be used by state, territory and local governments, and some private enterprises, to provide cardholders with other discounts, such as on utilities, public transport and council rates. The Australian Government has no jurisdiction over the provision of these concessions.

Motion number 123, Moyne Shire Council VIC

That the National General Assembly congratulates the Australian Government for developing a national early years reform strategy released in April 2025 and urges the government to implement the recommendations as soon as possible.

In December 2024, the Government released the *Early Years Strategy 2024-2034's* First Action Plan and Outcomes Framework. The First Action Plan outlines practical steps to improve outcomes for children and families in Australia from 2024 to 2027, including new investments in health, community services and early childhood education and care. The Outcomes Framework outlines how the Government will track and report against progress against the Strategy's vision.

While the First Action Plan documents the Commonwealth's activity in the early years, the Government recognises that achieving the Strategy's vision requires a collective effort. Many local governments play an active role in fostering family wellbeing and early childhood development, including through the direct provision of high-quality early childhood education and care services. The Australian Government will continue to work with partners across the sector towards the Strategy's shared vision.



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Motion number 126, City of Kingston VIC

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to acknowledge the role that local governments play in addressing the cost-of-living crisis through the sector's support for community food banks, homelessness services and the shifting of many of the costs of in-home aged care to local government.

In particular, we urge the Commonwealth to increase the real value of all social security payments so that recipients can afford to buy food after their unavoidable living expenses have been met.

- 1. We urge the Commonwealth to recognise the important role of food banks by increasing the funding available to charities working with local government to provide food to those living in poverty due to joblessness, ill health, disability, age or social isolation.*
- 2. Provide the Federal Government with other Cost of Living Relief options as researched by institutions and think tanks*

In addition to the payments and services outlined in response to Motion 53, the Australian Government also funds a range of support services for people who find themselves in financial stress.

In July 2025, the Albanese Government announced a boost of food relief and financial wellbeing support funding by 25 per cent to help ease cost-of-living pressures for half a million Australians. The total funding, rolling out from 1 October 2025, includes:

- \$275 million for immediate aid, including food and petrol vouchers, clothes, bedding, or toiletries.
- \$20 million for four food relief providers to increase the supply of affordable food, including donated food across Australia.
- \$98.4 million to help Australians manage their debt and make informed financial choices in the future.
- \$31.2 million to help people reduce the financial harm of problem gambling.
- \$38.1 million to support people to improve their financial literacy through integrated Financial Wellbeing services.

An additional \$20 million each year will be available to help respond quickly to increased demand during crisis events and natural disasters. These grants will help more Australian households, including working families and people in financial stress, to pay and manage bills or expenses such as high electricity bills, rent, food, fuel and medicines.

Further information is available at www.dss.gov.au/emergency-support.