



Council Agenda

Unscheduled Council Meeting



**Date: 25 March 2025 Time:
5:00pm**

Venue: On-line meeting

Viewing via Councils website

Photo Left to Right: Cr Tony Marwood, Cr Luck Sharrock, Cr Paul Jarman, Cr Rob Amos, Cr Daniel Mackrell (Mayor), Cr Jessica Mitchell (Deputy Mayor), Cr Zoe Cook, Cr Adrian Weston and Cr John Zobec

Table of Contents

Contents

1 Apologies and Requests for Leave of Absence.....	5
1.1 Apologies	5
1.2 Leave of Absence	5
2 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest	5
3 Council Decisions	6
3.1 Office of the CEO	6
3.1.1 ALGA NGA Motion/s	6
4 Close Meeting.....	18

For a meeting of the Campaspe Shire Council meeting held on Tuesday 25 March 2025, commencing at 5:00pm.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Campaspe is the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Yorta Yorta Peoples.

We respect and acknowledge their unique Aboriginal cultural heritage and pay our respect to their ancestors, descendants and emerging leaders as the Traditional Owners of this Country.

We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

Opening Prayer

We pray to almighty God that our decisions as a Council be in the best interest of the people, culture and the environment of the Shire of Campaspe.

Amen.

Meeting Procedures

Unscheduled Meeting

This Unscheduled Meeting has been convened in accordance with Governance Rule 2.1.2.

Please ensure that all electronic devices are turned off or switched to silent.

Council meetings are broadcast live via the internet. During the meeting, members of the public may be recorded, particularly those speaking to an item. By attending this meeting, you are consenting to the possibility that your image may also be broadcast to the public. Any personal and health information voluntarily disclosed by any person at Council meetings may be broadcast live, held by Council and made available to the public for later viewing.

Those people who have requested to speak to an item will be allowed five minutes to address Council. Speakers will be notified with a bell when there is 60 seconds remaining. Speakers must only speak in relation to the subject stated on their application and shall not debate the issue with Councillors and officers. Councillors are able to ask questions of the speaker on points of clarification.

Speakers are advised that they do not enjoy any special protection from defamation arising from comments made during their presentation to Council and should refrain from voicing defamatory remarks or personal defamatory statements against any individual. Speakers will be treated with respect when addressing Council. I ask that the same respect is extended to Councillors and officers.

1 Apologies and Requests for Leave of Absence

1.1 Apologies

1.2 Leave of Absence

2 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

In accordance with Section 130(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* Councillors are required to disclose any conflict of interest in respect of a matter to be considered at a Council meeting.

3 Council Decisions

3.1 Office of the CEO

3.1.1 ALGA NGA Motion/s

Directorate:	Office of the CEO
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Manager:	{custom-field-manager}
Attachments:	1. MRGC ALGA Motions 2025 [3.1.1.1 - 7 pages]
Conflict of Interest:	In accordance with section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020, the officer preparing this report declares no conflict of interest regarding this matter.
Council Plan Reference:	Council Plan
Other Strategic Context:	Advocacy Priorities

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider the motions it seeks to submit to the National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and to note the motions submitted by Loddon Shire Council on behalf of the Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the following motions for submission to the Australian Local Government Association – National General Assembly:
 - 1.1. This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to actively promote how and where people can access sexual and reproductive healthcare across regional and rural Australia.
 - 1.2. This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to support all states and territories to provide container deposit schemes and include glass containers for wine and spirits as refundable within the scheme.
 - 1.3. This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to mandate a resilient homes program with all State Governments to raise or retrofit residential properties at risk of flood inundation or other natural disasters, and which prioritises homeowners affected by disaster events since 2022 to build back better.
2. Notes the Murray River Group of Councils proposed ALGA Motions that will be presented to the National General Assembly by Loddon Shire Council who are the lead agency for 2025.

3. BACKGROUND

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) will hold its National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) in Canberra from 24-27 June 2025. The theme for NGA25 is '*National Priorities Need Local Solution*'.

Motions for this year's NGA should consider:

- Any new practical programs or policy changes that can strengthen the system of local government nationally to provide the services and infrastructure required to support and strengthen our communities; and/or
- New program ideas that that would help the local government sector to deliver place-based solutions to national priorities.

Campaspe Shire is a member of the Murray River Group of Councils, which includes Gannawarra Shire, Mildura City Council, Loddon, Moira, and Swan Hill Shire Councils. The Mayor and CEO represent council, with each mayor having the voting right.

Motions from the MRGC were circulated for consultation by member councils at the end of January and considered by CEOs at the February meeting. MRGC agreed to a final draft of these at its first Mayor and CEO meeting on 6 March in Gannawarra Shire where the proposed motions were endorsed by member Councils.

The motions proposed in the attachment are in line with current MRGC advocacy priorities and as far as possible in line with relevant Regional Economic Development strategies, relevant MAV election pillars: *Housing, Financial Sustainability, Energy Transition and Emergency Management and Resilience*.

Previous Council Discussion

Council Briefing 12 March 2025.

4. DISCUSSION

At the Council Briefing 12 March 2025, Councilors and officers discussed recommendations for motions to be submitted to the 2025 ALGA NGA that were over and above the joint submission by MRGC.

Officers have since developed these into potential motions as follows:

Motion one **Support and promotion of sexual and reproductive healthcare services.**

Category: **Community Services**

Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to promote how and where people can access sexual and reproductive healthcare across regional and rural Australia.

Summary of key argument:

Nationally, community access to sexual and reproductive healthcare poses significant challenges, particularly in rural and regional areas, with factors like limited services, stigma, and lack of awareness, impacting the ability of individuals to access timely and appropriate care. This creates social, cultural, and economic stressors for rural and regional women across Australia. Barriers to universal access to services disproportionately impact women and contribute to health inequities across the life course.

Essential sexual and reproductive health services include family planning, maternity care, infertility treatment, abortion-related care, and the prevention, detection, and treatment of sexually transmitted infections. The implications of sexual and reproductive ill-health extend beyond the disease burden, affecting the social and economic well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

The Australian Government needs to promote how and where individuals can ensure there is access to affordable services, as associated costs, i.e. travel expenses, are often prohibitive. Adequate access benefits individual health and positively impacts population health while poor access contributes to health inequities and increases the disease burden.

Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services is crucial for improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, and preventing communicable diseases. Despite Australia's reputation for advanced healthcare infrastructure, complex barriers and inequities persist in accessing these services in rural, regional, and remote areas of Australia.

Motion two Support for Expansion of Container Deposit Schemes

Category: **Environment / Circular economy**

Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to support all states and territories to provide container deposit schemes and include glass containers for wine and spirits as refundable within the scheme.

Summary of key argument:

The benefits of national consistency on container deposit schemes (CDS) eligible containers are self-explanatory and supported by the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) Behaviour Change – National Research study completed on behalf of the HEPA (the Heads of EPA Australia and New Zealand) which recommended removing the inconsistencies across states and expanding the scope of CDS eligible containers. While it is recognised the current scheme is focused on litter prevention it is shortsighted to limit the extensive collection infrastructure and supporting administration and governance to just materials that are considered likely to litter (the determination of which can be debated).

For Campaspe Shire Council, including wine and spirit bottles into the CDS will reduce what is in the kerbside glass stream by 40%. Research completed by a group of Councils in Victoria found that “expanding the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) to include wine and spirit bottles would have similar circularity benefits to a glass only bin, less contamination and would remove the need for millions of dollars of implementation costs for Councils.

Campaspe Shire Council supports this approach as current modelling shows the provision of a separate glass bin will require a capital investment of \$600k is required with ongoing additional operational costs of \$290k per annum, this will generate an additional 39 tonnes CO2-e per annum. These costs cannot be justified. Early kerbside glass adopters are reporting bin presentation rates of 20% on a monthly collection schedule, which means on average a household glass bin is being collected 2.4 times per year. Further, the benefits of a glassless commingled recycling stream cannot be realised in Campaspe Shire as the recycling acceptance and sorting facility is not glassless and so any material will be contaminated with glass while being processed.

Interestingly, both the Queensland and South Australian Governments have completed business cases that assess the net benefits of a kerbside glass only bin and opted to expand CDS to include wine and spirit bottles. South Australia's review recommendations included directing beverage containers away from kerbside streams to reduce the costs of local government and increase the

recovery of high value materials in line with the circular economy (Improving South Australia's Recycling Makes Cents - review of the container deposit scheme, September 2021). The Queensland Government has already implemented the inclusion of wine and spirit bottles into its CDS scheme. It is disappointing that Victoria opted to release a CDS scheme in 2023 that was already outdated at the time despite aiming to be a leader in the Circular Economy space on the world stage.

Motion three: National Resilient Homes Program mandate

Category: Emergency Management

Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to mandate a resilient homes program with all State Governments to raise or retrofit residential properties at risk of flood inundation or other natural disasters, and which prioritises homeowners affected by disaster events since 2022 to build back better.

Summary of key argument:

In an article on 21 February 2022, the ABC obtained a letter from federal Emergency Services Minister Jenny McCallister that said unlike Queensland and New South Wales, the Victorian Government did not request a Resilient Homes Fund program through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

The New South Wales government co-funded \$920 million to establish its Build Back Better fund to rebuild, repair, raise or buyback homes across the Central West and Northern Rivers regions.

In Queensland, federal and state governments allocated \$741 million to repair, retrofit or relocate homes after the 2022 floods.

The Victorian government has not offered any similar grants, and in a flood inquiry response released on January 30 it ruled out paying for residents to raise the height of their homes in areas worst affected by the 2022 floods that swept through much of the state.

Flood weary Victorians, particularly in townships like Rochester in Victoria say their state government has abandoned them by electing to not join with the federal government in an opportunity to future-proof their homes.

Mandating state governments to provide a consistent approach to a co-contribution will offer the support that all Australians are seeking with options to rebuild, repair, raise or buyback homes.

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Internal consultation:

- 19 March Executive Leadership Team Meeting.

Councillors:

- 12 March 2025 Briefing Session

Community Engagement

Council's Community Engagement Policy identifies the level of community engagement to be undertaken in accordance with the IAP2 framework. The level of community engagement undertaken is ongoing feedback from residents impacted by the 2022 Campaspe Floods.

Public Transparency Policy

N/A

6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The requirements of Section 9(2)(c) of Local Government Act 2020 have been considered and no issues of ongoing financial viability and no economic sustainability issues for the municipality have been identified within this report.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

8. OPPORTUNITIES AND RISK

Opportunities:

Risk management has been considered in the preparation of this report and no risks with a high or extreme rating have been identified in this process.

ALGA Motions

Prepared by: Geoff Turner, MRGC Executive Officer



Introduction

MRGC members will be attending ALGA from 24 – 27 June and it has been proposed that the Group seek to use motions to the National General Assembly to reinforce the MRGC advocacy positions.

Motions to the NGA are due by 31 March. It is proposed that Loddon Shire, as Chair, submit the motions on behalf of MRGC. An initial draft of these was circulated for consultation by member councils at the end of January and considered by CEOs at the February meeting. MRGC agreed a final draft of these at its first Mayor and CEO meeting on 6 March in Gannawarra Shire where the proposed motions were endorsed by member Councils.

Motions need to be consistent with the NGA theme of *Local Priorities Need Solutions* and should seek to promote practical programs where the Commonwealth can invest in local communities through Local Councils. ALGA in its discussion paper emphasizes place based solutions and clear outcomes as requirements for motions.

The motions proposed below are in line with agreed MRGC advocacy priorities and as far as possible also in line with relevant Regional Economic Development strategies and also, to place them in a Victorian context, relevant MAV election pillars: *Housing, Financial Sustainability, Energy Transition and Emergency Management and Resilience*.

Housing

Proposed Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide multi-year, regional housing development infrastructure funding for investment into essential trunk infrastructure such as sewerage, water, drainage, electricity, roads and communications, to facilitate residential housing development in regional and rural towns where the market is not delivering the needed housing opportunities.

Background

Housing affordability and availability are issues affecting almost all communities across Australia. While housing affordability in the regions remain relatively better than in cities, lack of supply of family housing for purchase and highly constrained rental markets have become unwelcome features of northern Victorian and many regional Australian housing markets.

A lack of housing availability is stifling job growth and business expansion in our region according to employers across our council areas. Regional Victoria, in

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common with many regional areas across Australia, has room to grow, available, identified land for expansion and resilient, vibrant communities.

Similar to all markets, population growth and a significant increase in land value for residential land across regional Victoria are drivers of insufficient housing supply.

In our region there also exist additional housing market factors specific to the regions that are further restricting the timely supply of new homes.

Regional and rural areas face higher upfront costs for associated enabling infrastructure (water, sewerage, roads, drainage, telecommunications, and electricity). They also face challenges in the availability of trades and suppliers which, with the relatively smaller size of projects affects developer economies of scale and risk appetite for developers to build homes in regional and rural towns.

Investment by governments to address this market failure will remove a key block on residential housing development in regional areas. Local Government is best placed to facilitate this and establish with their communities, the local housing solutions that will tackle their specific challenges.

Energy

Proposed Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to ensure that communities hosting new energy generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure required for Australia's energy transition, directly benefit from new investment to support job growth and in infrastructure upgrades ensuring that the regional communities directly impacted by it are not left behind in the race to transition our energy grid.

Background

Northern Victoria is where the energy transition is occurring. A new 500KV interconnector, VNI-West is in the final planning stages. When complete it will provide a second link between the Victorian and NSW energy grids to stabilise the National Electricity Market, join Victoria's grid to the Snowy Hydro Battery and increase the capacity for renewable energy generation.

Investment in large scale renewable energy generation is already significant with planning approvals for projects that could deliver over 4GW of renewable energy to the grid already in place. Northern Victoria has the location, climate and available appropriate land to host electricity generation infrastructure to provide clean power for the future. This has made it a popular place for investors to propose projects.

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Across the MRGC region, energy projects and transmission line upgrades are likely to impact our communities substantially over the next few years while much of the benefit will accrue to those living in the critical load centres of our capital cities.

Investment in local energy projects or other areas to assist critical regional industries, such as agriculture and food manufacturing which are suffering from higher and higher energy prices, will safeguard regional jobs and food production in Australia for all Australians.

Councils are ideally placed to facilitate appropriate local solutions that will deliver lasting benefit to communities

Other impacts of the transition will be felt in the regions from the temporary workforce. While welcoming local spend, providing temporary housing for hundreds of workers is a challenge. Councils are well placed to work with proponents and State and Federal Governments to find innovative solutions that would accommodate the temporary workforce and leave a positive legacy of longer term local housing market solutions.

Energy grid reliability is a key priority for investment from the energy transition to ensure that impacted regional communities do not miss out on the benefits of cheaper and more reliable electricity that the energy transmission upgrades and investment in new energy generation infrastructure are designed to deliver.

Water

Proposed Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to put Basin communities at the heart of Basin Plan delivery and future water reform by ceasing the damaging water purchase programs in our irrigation districts that will lead to job losses, put food production in our region at risk and will add to the cost of living crisis and instead engaging with communities and Local Governments to deliver a long term sustainable future for food growing and manufacturing in the Basin, and to ensure improved environmental outcomes for all the Basin's valued riverine and floodplain ecosystems.

Background

The Government's current approach to Basin Plan delivery is putting our food production industry and our communities' prosperity at risk. The Murray River Group's six council areas produce some \$7.75 billion in food every year. The entire regional economy and 16000 jobs depend on agriculture and food manufacturing across MRGC councils. Around half our 5000 farm businesses rely on irrigation.

As we prepare for a drier future with more intense and frequent extremes of weather, we need local, community led solutions both to ensuring a viable

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agriculture and food manufacturing sector into the future to produce local food for all Australians and also to ensure that unique valued environments across the region are sustained and nurtured.

Open market, non-strategic, buy backs are a blunt instrument that will increase the pressure on irrigation districts and on irrigators, inevitably pushing up the cost of living for all Australians.

There is a better way. Put communities at the heart of the Basin Plan and water reform. By working with local communities on a catchment level to design and implement local solutions that will deliver water savings for environmental watering and will reshape irrigation districts to allow them to be more efficient and continue to be viable into the future.

Transitioning to a lower water future will require innovation and investment in altering the irrigation network. Non-strategic, open market buy backs rip water from districts without regard to their long term operation. The evidence demonstrates that it increases water prices, increases farmer risk and exposure to the increasingly volatile temporary water market.

Roads and Bridges

Proposed Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to provide an additional road maintenance and restoration fund that invests directly in Local Government to fund the road infrastructure repair deficit road and allow local councils to catch up on the road and bridge repair backlog facing councils across the Country.

Background

Local Councils are responsible for 87 per cent of Victoria's road network. MRGC councils maintain over 23,000 kms of roads which is similar to the length of road assets that the State of Victoria manages. In the regions, these council maintained roads are vital to keep our communities connected and provide access to health care, education, and other vital services. Regional roads are critical freight corridors relied upon for enabling produce to reach market here and for export. The freight task continues to increase, adding further pressure to the regional road network and impacting driver safety.

Despite increases in the Roads to Recovery federal funding, long term consistent underfunding of local government means that there is a significant backlog of road maintenance across the country.

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Investing in a one off local road maintenance “blitz” would have direct safety and efficiency dividends for all Australians.

In Victoria despite only 1 in 5 people living in country Victoria, consistently between 50 and 60 per cent of road fatalities occur on regional roads. The majority of these are local people who die within 30kms of their homes.

As Infrastructure Australia has pointed out: Local governments in regional and remote Australia face the dual challenge of maintaining geographically extensive networks while having a relatively low revenue base from which to fund roadworks.

MAV identifies the maintenance backlog in Victoria alone as being around \$4 billion.

Resilient Infrastructure

Proposed Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish a regional infrastructure resilience fund that will provide local councils with dedicated funding to identify and invest in resilient local infrastructure to ensure communities are better protected and connected even in the face of increasingly severe and frequent weather events.

Background

2011 saw 1 in 100 year flood events across northern Victoria. 2016 saw severe flooding in some of the same areas and 2022 saw a repeat of the 1 in 100 event with many of the same roads, bridges, drains and other critical local infrastructure damaged again.

While taxpayer funds provided through the DRFA were provided (after long delays in some cases) to repair these assets, the strict rules and highly bureaucratic processes meant that they had to be repaired to the same standard as they were prior to the flood events – even if the base standard had been altered since the construction of the asset.

This was true even when an increased amount of funding in 2011 would have allowed for a more resilient construction standard to be substituted that would have prevented damage in 2016 and or 2022, ultimately saving taxpayer’s money and communities and businesses much disruption.

Increasing frequency and severity of weather events across Australia means fire and flood recovery is a fact of life for councils. A funding stream that provides local councils with the resources to construct to a quality that will be resistant to damage will protect our local communities and will save the Commonwealth and State Governments – an ultimately all Australian taxpayers millions of dollars in repair bills.

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Swimming Pools**Proposed Motion:**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish a dedicated national fund to support Local Government to replace and upgrade public swimming pools by providing financial assistance to local councils for the repair, replacement, and upgrading of aging public swimming pool facilities.

Background

The 1956 Olympics left a legacy of swimming pools across Australia that left an indelible impression on our national identity. Swimming pools provide essential opportunities for physical activity, contributing to the overall health and well-being of the community. With a strong culture of swimming in Australia, public pools are widely used for exercise, relaxation, and recreation, promoting a healthier lifestyle for all age groups. Swimming remains one of Australia's favourite sports according to Australian Government data.

These pools are reaching the end of their effective lives and many require urgent investment. Local Government has for many years now wrestled with unaffordable running costs and ongoing maintenance.

Many regional and rural councils have multiple outdoor concrete seasonal pools servicing widely spread, relatively small populations. The overall importance of these facilities means that closure is not an option for many.

It is estimated that \$8 billion will be required over the next decade to meet the infrastructure demands of public swimming pools across Australia.

Safe, accessible swimming pools are crucial to public health, not just for recreational swimming, but also for essential life-saving skills such as swimming and water safety education. Access to well-maintained public pools is fundamental in teaching water safety and survival skills, and helps to prevent tragic accidents.

Swimming pools provide a social function offering a space for community gather, engage in activities, and connect, especially important in rural and regional areas. In these areas, pools can serve as a vital resource for social cohesion and physical activity, fundamental to community wellbeing.

A significant funding investment over the next 10 years by Federal Government in partnership with Local Councils would see Australian public swimming pools remain a key part of our communities for the next 50 years.

Financial Sustainability

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This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to increase the Financial Assistance Grants to Local Government in even increments over the next ten financial years until the total funding to Australian amount is restored to 1% of the Australian Government tax revenue by the 2035/36 financial year.

Background

30 years ago, the total Financial Assistance Grants supplied to Local Government was the equivalent to 1% of the Commonwealth national tax take collected by the Federal Government. Now, it is half that.

All levels of Government are facing increasing financial pressures. The Victorian local government sector is experiencing significant financial challenges.

As reported by the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) the number of Victorian councils reporting on underlying operating deficit in 2022-23 compared to the results in 2018-19 has increased from 29% to 46%. This is despite, as VAGO points out, the early payment of Financial Assistance Grants preventing more councils reporting a deficit.

Commonwealth and State Government revenue bases grow in line with economic growth. This is not the case for Local Government. Rates are subject to arbitrary capping by the Victorian Government. The amount of Financial Assistance Grants made available to Local Government continues to decrease as percentage of total Commonwealth Government taxation revenue.

This is inevitably resulting in councils taking difficult decisions to reduce spending on services and infrastructure investment for communities.

4 Close Meeting

Pauline Gordon

Chief Executive Officer