

Management Report to Council

Agenda item 6.6

Participation in Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly, Canberra, June 2019

26 March 2019

Presenter: Keith Williamson, Manager Governance and Legal

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide for City of Melbourne participation in the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) to be held in Canberra in June 2019.
2. The ALGA NGA provides a forum for local government to discuss and advance issues of national significance to local government. Member councils have the opportunity of submitting motions of national significance.

Key issues

3. The 2019 NGA theme is *Future Focused* and acknowledges that the NGA will be held after a federal election. In doing so, it highlights the importance of a strong local government voice being heard by the incoming government to deliver in collaboration for local communities.
4. Following discussion by Councillors, motions on two issues are proposed for submission on behalf of the City of Melbourne, namely
 - 4.1. Waste management and sustainable practices.
 - 4.2. Rectification of building cladding.
5. Attachment 2 includes details of each motion, the national significance and key supporting arguments.
6. Council is also requested to determine the level of Councillor representation at the NGA. The cost associated with participation is estimated at \$3709 per Councillor and includes airfare, accommodation for up to three nights, registration and incidental costs.
7. The deadline for submission of motions is 29 March 2018.

Recommendation from management

8. That Council:
 - 8.1. Approves the motions outlined in Attachment 2 for consideration at the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) National General Assembly.
 - 8.2. Nominates Councillors to represent Council at the ALGA National General Assembly in Canberra in June 2019 at an estimated cost of \$3709 per Councillor.

Attachment:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 4)
2. Proposed motions for the ALGA NGA (Page 3 of 4)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.

Finance

2. The cost associated with representation at the ALGA NGA in Canberra is estimated at \$3709 per Councillor. This includes conference registration fees (\$1239), accommodation for three nights (\$970), airfare (\$950) and incidental costs (\$550).

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Occupational Health and Safety

4. Travellers will undertake standard personal safety and awareness precautionary steps which apply to interstate travel.

Relation to Council policy

5. The ALGA NGA will provide Council with the opportunity of demonstrating local government leadership by advancing key issues and contributing to discussion on matters connected to the goals contained in the Council Plan.

Environmental sustainability

6. The carbon emission resulting from air travel to attend the ALGA NGA will be offset with the purchase of credits.

PROPOSED MOTIONS BY THE CITY OF MELBOURNE

AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (ALGA) NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, JUNE 2019

SUBJECT: WASTE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

MOTION:

That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Formally review and rewrite procurement policies for all Australian Government departments to require a level of recyclable content in materials procured, to assist in the creation of domestic markets.
2. Pass new legislation during 2019 that applies strong national product stewardship laws, creating significant disincentives to companies to mass produce or import products (including packaging) that are not economically recyclable.

NATIONAL OBJECTIVE:

This is a national issue because:

- The regulatory lever for commercial waste minimisation sits primarily at a federal level.
- Government can play a lead role in driving demand for recycled products. This leverage is greater at a national level and with all three levels of government involved.

It therefore should be negotiated at the ALGA National General Assembly because:

- Waste management is a critical national issue for Australia.
- Local government is a key player in solving the current waste challenges.

SUMMARY OF KEY ARGUMENTS:

Australia is facing a waste crisis. Volumes of waste keep increasing and the demand and prices for recyclable materials has fallen dramatically in the wake of the decision by China in early 2018 to close their doors to imported recyclable materials. Recently all recyclables from the City of Melbourne (and many other municipalities) were sent to landfill as a result of the inability of recycling contractors to take recyclables. In addition access to landfills is becoming more difficult and the ongoing use of landfills has significant environmental impacts including greenhouse gases and the potential for leakage of toxic chemicals.

Local government is at the 'end of the line' in the waste cycle as it is responsible for waste collection and disposal of waste. Little effort is being made to prevent the generation of waste.

The key challenge with waste is that resources are cheap (not properly priced given the impact of resource extraction on the environment) and the disposal of waste is cheap (again the impact on the environment is not fully costed). Effort is therefore required to:

- Prevent the generation of waste.
- Increase the demand for recycled materials.

These motions aim to:

- Prevent waste generation through regulation at the federal level.
- Increase the demand for recycled materials through leveraging the significant purchasing power of government.

SUBJECT: RECTIFICATION OF BUILDING CLADDING

MOTION:

That the National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to:

1. Recognise the national significance of the financial implications of cladding rectification for building owners.
2. Establish a rectification relief fund, providing access to grants and low or interest-free loans to expedite unsafe cladding removal.

NATIONAL OBJECTIVE:

All states and territories will be confronted with the need to address the issue of building cladding rectification and in a way that allows this to occur in a timely and co-ordinated manner. A nation-wide approach is needed.

One such avenue is through a government funding model where owners of buildings with combustible cladding have access to grants and low interest or interest-free loans.

SUMMARY OF KEY ARGUMENTS:

Following the November 2014 fire at the Docklands Lacrosse building, the Victorian Building Authority conducted an audit of building permits in the Melbourne CBD and surrounds. Other states soon followed with audits and legislative responses to this issue.

In some cases, building owners are able to make a claim against the builder for the cost of rectification, which involves the removal of combustible cladding from buildings. For the most part, building owners are left with the task of paying to rectify their buildings. The private market to provide financing options for cladding rectification is currently immature.

The cost of rectification is one of the biggest obstacles in rectifying buildings with combustible cladding and the Commonwealth is best placed to assist with financing options.