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ABN 84 873 116 132

July 28, 2020

**ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**TO BE HELD**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2020**

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA NO. 1**



**JAMES RONCON**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

## **FURTHER BUSINESS**

1. MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 9/20 - DATED JULY 27, 2020 - LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT EXCLUSION FROM NATIONAL CABINET (11/161)..... 3

## ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

July 27, 2020

**ITEM 1**MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 9/20

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXCLUSION FROM NATIONAL CABINET  
11/161

**Summary**

On 13 March 2020, as the Coronavirus pandemic took hold around the world, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) met in Sydney to discuss a range of issues of national importance. At that meeting First Ministers (the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers) agreed to establish a National Cabinet to meet at least weekly to address the country's response to the coronavirus. The focus was primarily on the health and wellbeing of Australians and managing the health response. Over time National Cabinet has broadened its agenda to include a focus on managing coronavirus impacts across Australia. There was no Local Government representation on National Cabinet when it was established on the basis that its focus was on health.

On 29 May 2020, First Ministers, through the Prime Minister, announced the continuation of National Cabinet, which they considered to be a much more effective body than COAG for taking decisions in the national interest. Local Government was not given a seat at the National Cabinet table. However, ALGA as the national representative body of Local Government, was given a seat on the National Federation Reform Council (NFRC). The NFRC will meet once a year to focus on priority national federation issues such as Closing the Gap and Women's Safety. In addition to ALGA, the NFRC is comprised of the National Cabinet and the Council of Federal Financial Relations – Federal and State/Territory Treasurers.

The President of ALGA had been a member of COAG since it was convened by Prime Minister Keating in 1992. Local Government was included because all parties recognised that Australia has three levels of government and that the Government with most impact on people's daily lives in terms of the provision of local services and infrastructure is Local Government.

Decisions about how our Federation works and how it can be improved or reformed require all three levels of government working together to align their policies and programs. Australians expect the decisions of government affecting them to reflect their grass roots views and to be implemented at the local level as well as the state and national level. This was the case with the development and implementation of the National Competition Policy in the 1990s which included reform at the local government level as well as the National and State levels in areas such as water supply and infrastructure provision through procurement.

National Cabinet, and the Commonwealth Government in particular, are looking towards pro-growth policies to lift investment and get Australians back to work. With a focus on jobs growth they are seeking ways to enable parts of the economy to grow. Local Governments are willing and necessary partners in developing and implementing reform. Reform involving the streamlining of legislation and regulation requires all the levels of government which are involved in regulation working together to achieve the benefits of reform for everyone without

imposing costs or burdens on local communities. Getting it right on the ground is Local Government's area of strength.

Councils facilitate, establish, and grow local businesses and economies. Economic development has always been at the core of every successful council. Councils support economic growth through regional development policies and initiatives, strategic and land use planning, targeted investment attraction, prioritisation of local procurement, and focusing their annual investment on infrastructure that serves the community and business alike. Many councils also provide business networking opportunities, business training, mentoring, and incubator facilities and employment hubs. It is local government that is best placed to drive locally-led recovery

The challenge facing National Cabinet over the coming months is unlike any which has faced Australian governments in recent times and it will require the concerted, coordinated and complementary efforts of all three levels of government to rebuild consumer confidence, support business and recreate millions of jobs.

Australians expect their three levels of government to be working together, and to see evidence of that. Including Local Government in National Cabinet would demonstrate a strong unity of purpose and a combined commitment to promote and implement National Cabinet decisions across the broadest implementation platform available to government.

### **Recommendation**

1. That Mayoral Minute No. 9/20 dated July 27, 2020, be received.
2. That Council sends correspondence to the Premier of NSW, the Federal Member for Parkes and the State Member for Barwon, highlighting the critical necessity for Local Government representation on the newly formed National Cabinet and seeks their assistance in requesting that First Ministers review the decision to exclude Local Government.
3. That Council seeks a meeting with our local Federal and State Members to discuss in more detail the importance of having local government representation on National Cabinet and the value of partnerships with Councils in achieving the objectives of the National Cabinet and the national reform agenda.
4. That Council notes that the Australian Local Government Association, Local Government NSW and other state/territory local government associations will continue to advocate for local government representation on the National Cabinet and for Local Government's interests in all relevant forums.

### **Attachments**

1. [↓](#) LGNSW President's Message

**D TURLEY AM**  
**MAYOR**

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## Member Message

**Attention: Mayors, Councillors, General Managers**

Dear Colleagues,

The May decision to omit local government representation from the new National Cabinet has sparked real concern right across Australia.

Like so many of you who have contacted me directly, I and the LGNSW Board strongly believe all three tiers of government must be represented on this new intergovernmental body



The drought, bushfires, floods and COVID-19 pandemic of recent months have all proved conclusively that local government – the closest level of government to the community – is critical in delivering local services and infrastructure at a grassroots level.

We need a seat at the table and a voice in discussions, not only to flag the impact of federal policies on local governments and communities, but to help shape our nation's future.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) brings together the leaders of all state and territory local government associations, and as a foundation member of COAG has worked constructively in that forum for many years to represent you on issues of national significance.

This is particularly important now that COAG meetings have been reduced to one per year, with the vast majority of decision-making referred to the National Cabinet.

The ALGA Board is advocating strongly for the inclusion of a local government representative in the National Cabinet: a representative whose first and foremost consideration is the impact of decisions on councils and the communities they represent.

I know many of you are keen to amplify this message by undertaking your own direct advocacy with your local MPs and the Premier of NSW.

To support you in these efforts we have developed an Advocacy Kit, which you can access [here](#).  
You can also: **Past Issues**

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- Pass a Council resolution to write to your local MP and Premier highlighting the importance of a dedicated local government representative on National Cabinet;
- Meet your local Federal and State MPs to discuss the importance of local government involvement in National Cabinet, and to highlight any local instances where national policy and programs failed to deliver because they didn't take account of local circumstances or involve a partnership with local government;
- Follow up your meeting with a letter reinforcing the key messages that you want to get across;
- Talk to the local media in support of the Council resolution; and
- Share the outcomes of your advocacy with ALGA and LGNSW.

LGNSW will continue to advocate on your behalf at every opportunity. Through ALGA, we will help ensure local government is recognised as a necessary and active partner in Australia's system of democratically elected, representative government.

LGNSW is calling on the NSW Premier to ensure local government is represented on National Cabinet, and that all three tiers of government can best work together to drive locally led recovery right across Australia.

Please join with me, ALGA, and our interstate colleagues to ensure this message is heard as clearly and loudly as possible.

*Linda*

Cr Linda Scott  
President

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