



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
of the
NORTHERN TERRITORY**

POLICY STATEMENTS

As at 22 April 2021

(includes 2002 - 2021 amendments)

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1. Inter-Government Relations

1.1. Cooperation

- (a) LGANT supports cooperation between the three spheres of government to ensure good governance which promotes the well-being of Territorians.
- (b) LGANT is committed to strengthening and formalising its relationship with the Northern Territory Government through partnership agreements which detail these relationships including detailing how interactions and communications are to be enacted. (Amended at GM October 2003 – Item 8.1)

1.2. Recognition

- (a) LGANT supports the recognition of Local Government in the *Constitution Act* of the Commonwealth of Australia.
- (b) LGANT supports the recognition of Local Government in the proposed *Constitution Act* of the Northern Territory.
- (c) LGANT supports the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the *Constitution Act* of the Commonwealth of Australia. (Adopted at General Meeting November 2014, Item 7.3)
- (d) LGANT calls on the Northern Territory Government to acknowledge local government by establishing a Ministerial portfolio with exclusive responsibility for local government to:
 1. give due recognition for it being a sphere of government in the Australian Federation
 2. ensure there is a dedicated Minister for Local Government who has adequate resources at his disposal. (Adopted GM 1 December 2016)ⁱ

1.3. Local Government Autonomy

- (a) LGANT supports principles of local democracy and local government accountability to its constituent communities along with the separation of powers as detailed in legislation.
- (b) LGANT calls upon the Territory Government to reduce the limits placed on local government which require it to commit resources to meeting Territory Government demands in place of the legitimate activities it is performing for its constituents.

1.4. Statehood for the Northern Territory

- (a) LGANT supports recognition of the Northern Territory as Australia's 7th State.
- (b) LGANT:
 - affirms in principle support for Statehood;
 - recognises the tensions concerning the relationship between the capital centre and regions as an obstacle to the Territory moving forward;
 - recognises the concentration of political power in the capital centre as impacting upon these tensions;
 - identifies the process of designing and endorsing a constitution for a new state as a unique opportunity to address these tensions and move forward as a united and inclusive Territory and further recognises the opportunity to address these tensions and create a modern and new constitution where other States have failed to do so;

- respectfully requests the Statehood convention process include the following for discussion and consideration:
 - a constitution statement that reflects the rights and responsibilities of all people of the new State, including specific statements in relation to regions;
 - a constitutional formula that ensures equitable distribution of financial resources across the regions, particularly discretionary and non-essential infrastructure; and
 - constitutional protection of regions in the way that political power is dispersed.

(Adopted at General Meeting November 2010 – Item 7.1)

- (c) LGANT calls upon the Northern Territory Government to provide a constitutional guarantee of continuance of local government in the Northern Territory through inclusion of the following provisions in a future Northern Territory constitution:
- there shall be a system of local government in the Northern Territory;
 - the system shall consist of a number of local governments and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory;
 - local government shall be constituted with such powers as the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory considers necessary for the better government of those areas of the Northern Territory that are subject, from time to time to that system of local government;
 - where a Member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly proposes to introduce a Bill in the Legislative Assembly that affects local government generally, the Member must arrange for a summary of the Bill to be given to the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory in a reasonable time prior to its introduction.

(Adopted at General Meeting November 2010 – Item 7.1)

1.5. Policy Development

- (a) LGANT recognises that the needs of local communities are best addressed when Local Government is accepted by the other two spheres of government as a partner in developing relevant policies and programs.
- (b) LGANT supports Local Government being an equal partner in inter-governmental processes affecting those activities for which it carries legislative or financial responsibilities.

1.6. Representationⁱⁱ

- (a) Local Government should be represented on all committees established by Government which impact on any aspect of Local Government operations and through the LGANT Executive will decide on the basis of merit, the nominations to be put forward to formal committees of the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments and other organisations.
- (b) That delegates to LGANT committees provide copies of their reports (or preferably proceedings of meetings) within two months after their attendance at committee meetings so that the LGANT Executive and members can later determine their treatment in terms of LGANT policies and the corporate plan. (Amended at GM March 2002 - Item 8.7)

1.7. Defining Roles and Responsibilities

- (a) LGANT supports a review of roles, responsibilities and procedures of the three spheres of government.
- (b) LGANT supports the transfer to Local Government of additional powers and responsibilities that can best be dealt with at the local level. The transfer should be subject to proper negotiation, clear definition of the roles and functions involved, and guarantees of adequate ongoing funding.

1.8. Development of Local Governmentⁱⁱⁱ

- (a) LGANT supports Nhulunbuy being part of a local government area with council members elected from the community. (Amended at Executive Meeting 29 July 2008 – Item 10.2)
- (b) LGANT supports councils being constituted as Local Government which lead to the total incorporation of the Northern Territory into Local Government areas. (Adopted at Executive Meeting June 2004 – Item 10.2.1)
- (c) LGANT supports Local Government as the appropriate sphere of government having responsibility for public infrastructure and facilities and for providing services (under contract with private firms or through its own workforces) in local government areas
- (d) LGANT supports the formation of larger councils providing:
 - there is a strong case in terms of financial sustainability for new councils
 - the Northern Territory Government continues to provide financial assistance towards their establishment.
- (e) LGANT does not support areas being excised from local government areas to become unincorporated. (Adopted at General Meeting November 2010 – Item 7.5)

1.9. Access to Information

- (a) LGANT supports open access to government information.
- (b) LGANT supports the collection of local government data - on the condition that:
 - data is collected by LGANT
 - data is aggregated
 - councils retain ownership of their own data
 - minimal burden is place on councils for the collection of data.
 (Adopted at General Meeting November 2013 – Agenda Item 7.3)
- (c) LGANT supports councils committing to improving their asset and financial planning by making use of any model plans, policies and strategies LGANT has available and that meet governance requirements. (Policy adopted at GM 3 April 2014 – Item 7.3).

1.10. Visits to Council Areas

- (a) All Federal and Territory Ministers and members, when officially visiting Local Government areas should observe the protocol of formally advising the council head office of their visits and where possible make time available to meet with Local Government representatives.

1.11. Northern Territory Elections

- (a) LGANT supports political parties and independent candidates contesting a Northern Territory Government election:
1. being notified in advance of an election of the issues that local government wants them to commit to in the event of such a party (or parties) winning that election. (Adopted at Executive Meeting March 2005 – Item 6.3)
 2. releasing their policy positions one week before mobile polling in remote areas and early voting in town and city areas so that voters can be apprised of political party and independent positions before casting their votes. (Policy updated at GM 1 December 2016 – Item 7.10) ^{iv}

1.12. Local Government Elections

- (a) Electronic Voting for Council By-Elections^v

LGANT calls on the Territory Government to:

- commence the introduction of trials of online voting and counting of votes in local government by-elections:
 - during the current term of office of councils
 - with a view to having the full use of online voting and counting of votes for the 2021 council general elections
 - with the proviso that security issues to do with online voting are resolved.
- introduce the choice for local governments to run elections/voting on remote communities to reduce costs and to expand the time available to community members for voting.

- (b) Election Plans and Service Level Agreements

LGANT calls upon the Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) to:

- enter into service level agreements and election plans with councils for their general elections
- provide for council officers to manage local council elections and to expand the time available for voting in remote areas
- allow council officers to have access to the NT Electoral Roll in order to keep it up to date in local government areas
- allow candidates for local government elections to have the same access to the NT Electoral Roll as candidates in NT Legislative Assembly elections.

- (c) Election Expenses

LGANT supports the expenses incurred by candidates in Local Government elections being tax deductible on the same basis as those of candidates in State and Commonwealth elections.

- (d) Candidate Information Sessions

LGANT supports the implementation of candidate information sessions prior to local government elections. (Policy updated at General Meeting April 2015 – Item 7.8)

2. People and Community

2.1. Services provided for other spheres of government

- (a) LGANT supports the Commonwealth and Territory Governments assisting Local Government to deliver better services for local communities through:
- increased funding to match the devolution of responsibilities
 - cooperative planning tailored to local needs and especially in terms of providing local employment
 - broad-banding of programs to focus on agreed outcomes
 - negotiated contractual agreements covering funding, objectives, roles and responsibilities
- (b) LGANT supports councils delivering services in the most cost effective manner for other spheres of government provided:
- councils are compensated for all costs including:
 - vehicle operating and replacement costs
 - information and communication technology costs
 - office/workspace accommodation costs and
 - staff housing accommodation costs
 - councils can charge an administrative overhead fee for service delivery grants for agency arrangements in recognition of management costs associated with:
 - executive and governance
 - operations
 - human resources
 - finance
 - there is an understanding that salaries and wages includes the oncost components of:
 - superannuation
 - uniforms
 - leave loading
 - annual leave including higher duties/replacement staff
 - long service leave
 - relocation
 - other relevant allowances, eg overtime.

(Adopted at Executive Meeting 15 March 2010 – Agenda Item 6.7)

- (c) LGANT calls on the Northern Territory Government to operate maintain and upgrade morgue facilities in remote communities. (Adopted at Executive Meeting 8 December 2016)

2.2. Housing^{vi}

- (a) LGANT supports the Australian and Northern Territory governments' responsibility for the provision and delivery of public housing in urban and remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.
- (b) LGANT supports the normalisation of urban and remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and endorses the following set of principles to be used in the delivery of public housing and supporting infrastructure programs:
 - regional economic development;
 - development of industry and ongoing employment and training within local communities;
 - the development of infrastructure (including appropriate street lighting, sealed and kerbed roads, appropriate storm water collection and disposal, footpaths, open space /parks, street names and road gazettal) to ensure the protection of the natural environment and that the health, safety and amenity of residents is enhanced and maintained;
 - public housing complies with statutory regulations, applicable codes and standards, and industry best practice;
 - house and infrastructure design must be sensitive and appropriate to the needs of the community and tenants;
 - housing and infrastructure design to be environmentally sustainable/energy efficient;
 - subdivisions are to be designed and constructed to the requirements of both councils and the Northern Territory Government
 - that the construction or refurbishment of houses represents best value for money.

2.3. Sport, Recreation and Leisure

- (a) LGANT supports the development of quality sporting, recreation and leisure facilities, programs and services to meet local community needs and recognises the value of such services in enhancing the quality of life of in communities.
- (b) LGANT believes Local Government is strategically placed to make the most effective use of Commonwealth funding assistance for recreation, sport, leisure and cultural facilities and programs. Commonwealth and Territory Government funding support is essential for all communities especially for new developing communities in their establishment years if growing community needs are to be met.

2.4. Libraries^{vii}

- (a) LGANT supports the provision of library services to Northern Territory residents with Local Government acting as an agent of, or in partnership with, the Northern Territory Government either utilising its centralised processing service or providing a stand-alone service. (Policy adopted at GM April 2004 - Item 8.4)
- (b) LGANT supports a growth factor reflecting population growth and prices at least equivalent to the movement in the Consumer Price Index being built annually into the operational subsidies paid to Local Government for library services. (Policy adopted at GM April 2004 - Item 8.4)

(c) LGANT recognises the rights of individual councils to withdraw from the provision of library services in the event of less than satisfactory financial arrangements being offered. (Policy adopted at GM April 2004 - Item 8.4)

(d) LGANT supports the Northern Territory Government's central processing library management system in having the following characteristics:

- being 'user friendly';
- capable of supporting the needs of residents;
- possessing adequate backup; and
- providing for ongoing development and support.

(Policy adopted at GM April 2004 - Item 8.4)

(e) LGANT calls on the NT Government to:

- provide an immediate injection of funds for capital upgrades and operational funding in recognition of the increased service requirements councils are under pressure to deliver
- negotiate in good faith with local government the development of a sustainable service and funding model to operate in the NT in perpetuity that recognises inflationary pressures and increases in service delivery
- continue the Public Library Advisory Committee with an appropriate local government representation, both urban and remote, meeting at least twice a year.

2.5. People with Disabilities

(a) LGANT recognises the rights of people with special needs and will continually strive for efficient and non-discriminatory work practices and equity in the provision of goods and services.

2.6. Community Relations

(a) LGANT endorses and supports the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation vision of "a united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all."

(b) LGANT seeks to promote inclusive and just communities and to foster harmonious relations amongst Australia's diverse peoples. LGANT believes that regardless of their first language, birthplace, religion, race, cultural background, gender or sexual orientation, all people should have the same rights and opportunities. (Policy updated 8 November 2018 General meeting.)^{viii}

(c) LGANT will continue to respect and encourage cultural diversity, aiming to capture the benefits of that diversity for local communities while at the same time promoting national identity and community cohesion.

(d) LGANT reaffirms its commitment to improved service delivery and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It recognises the importance of the culture and heritage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, and also affirms its commitment to the reconciliation process between indigenous peoples and other Australians.

2.7. Native Title

(a) LGANT supports Local Government obtaining and disseminating a consistent and reliable source of information in regard to Native Title.

2.8. Access and Equity

- (a) LGANT will promote the principles of access and equity in service provision which includes addressing the needs of residents of non-English speaking backgrounds and Indigenous Australians.
- (b) LGANT supports the Commonwealth Government assisting councils to develop appropriate information in languages to meet the needs of non-English speaking and Indigenous people.
- (c) LGANT supports fluoridating of town water supplies in communities greater than 1000 people. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 19 May 2008 item 10.2.3)

2.9. Community Safety

- (a) LGANT supports the Territory and Federal Government being the lead agencies for providing funding for community-based safety and crime prevention strategies with local governments offering support where they can.
- (b) LGANT supports local planning, development and service provision by all spheres of government taking into account community safety issues.
- (c) LGANT supports the provision of cyclone shelters in towns in cyclone prone areas and prefers them to be constructed in preference to the practice of organising mass evacuations of people to major population centres.
- (d) LGANT supports members using petroleum products which have been developed to reduce the incidence of petrol sniffing in communities. (Policy adopted at GM April 2005 - Item 7.3. Amended at GM May 2006 – Item 7.3) (Policy amended and adopted at Executive meeting 8 September 2008)
- (e) LGANT supports the Territory Government leading the way with measures for reducing alcohol related harm in communities with local governments offering support where they can.
- (f) *LGANT supports timely and relevant information (including impact statements) being provided to councils on liquor licence applications so they can be given proper consideration at council meetings.*
- (g) LGANT believes collaboration by all spheres of government, industry peaks, key service providers and communities is critical in preventing harm by alcohol. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 23 May 2017 item 6.2)
- (h) LGANT supports alcohol supply reduction strategies at point of sale. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 23 May 2017 item 6.2)
- (i) LGANT advocates both Australian and Northern Territory Governments to continue to fund programs that specifically aim to improve community wellbeing in ways that reduce the risk of crime, alcohol harm reduction and build on community capacity to deal with the consumption of alcohol (e.g. living with alcohol program). (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 23 May 2017 item 6.2)
- (j) LGANT supports legislation and regulation to reduce the number of takeaway outlets to reduce alcohol harm. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 23 May 2017 item 6.2)
- (k) LGANT supports legislation and regulation to reduce the density of takeaway outlets to reduce alcohol harm on condition that the data is provided. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 23 May 2017 item 6.2)
- (l) LGANT supports the requirement for an independent community impact assessment for all licence applications, administered and funded by the Department of Health. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 23 May 2017 item 6.2)

- (m) LGANT supports councils, in collaboration with Northern Territory and Australian Government authorities, putting in place reasonable protective security measures for public safety purposes. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 19 August 2019)

2.10. Human Resources^{ix}

- (a) LGANT supports the development and implementation of continuous annual training programs for council elected members and local authority members throughout their four-year terms of office.
- (b) LGANT supports elected members completing mandatory training within the first 12 months of their terms of office.
- (c) LGANT supports the portability of long service leave and superannuation benefits for government employees when there are employment transfers between all spheres of government.
- (d) LGANT supports equal employment opportunity and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and harassment in the workplace.
- (e) LGANT supports council specific workforce plans and workforce development strategies with the aims of:
1. making local government an employer of choice. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 21 May 2013 Item 10.1)
 2. increasing the digital competencies of employees
 3. improving the intake of under 30 years of age employees
 4. maintaining or improving the employment of Indigenous Australians.
- (f) LGANT supports the creation of guidelines for standard workforce planning and development reporting for inclusion into council annual reports. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 21 May 2013 Item 10.1)
- (g) LGANT supports fair superannuation for Mayors, Presidents, Aldermen and Councillors which is a basic right for Federal, State and Territory Parliamentarians and everyone else in the Australian workforce.

2.11. Shared Services^x

- (a) LGANT supports councils entering into shared services arrangements and collaborating on issues of common interest based on the following principles:
- there are improved levels and quality of service
 - a coordinated approach is in place for:
 - the provision of services
 - the aggregation of data for the local government sector
 - there are reductions in the cost of services
 - opportunities arise irrespective of the size or locations of councils:
 - to develop new initiatives
 - to benefit from joint initiatives which enable them to do things they might otherwise have the capacity to do on their own
 - economies of scale are achieved from a single entity representing councils by leveraging of procurement opportunities
 - it is legislatively compliant. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 20 September 2016 Item 6.3)

2.12. Language, Literacy and Numeracy^{xi}

- (a) LGANT acknowledges that the extent and impact of low levels of English language, literacy and numeracy in the Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse adult population in the Northern Territory requires:
 - a national policy and strategies to support it
 - commitments that:
 - are prioritised, coordinated and sustained
 - endure beyond changes in government
 - involve all three spheres of government.
- (b) LGANT calls upon the Northern Territory government to identify a key agency that will take responsibility and leadership for adult language, literacy and numeracy in remote regional communities of the Northern Territory.
- (c) LGANT acknowledges the importance of language, literacy and numeracy skills for Aboriginal adults in regional remote communities on the basis that they:
 - are a human right
 - are an enabler for enhancing social inclusion and participation in life
 - help people to:
 - fully develop their knowledge and skills
 - engage in a more fulfilling lifestyle.
- (d) LGANT supports the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments entering into a bipartisan agreement to fund open access, culturally appropriate community based adult learning programs in Aboriginal communities as a matter of priority.
- (e) LGANT calls upon the Commonwealth government to provide targeted training for Aboriginal staff and supervisors who wish to improve their English language, literacy and numeracy and foundational skills in workplaces within communities to enable career progression.
- (f) LGANT recognises the importance of early childhood education in the acquisition of language, literacy and numeracy and the need for bilingual programs.
(Policy adopted at Executive Meeting 12 June 2018 Item 6.3)

2.13. Children and Youth^{xii}

- (a) LGANT affirms that local government has a duty for the protection and wellbeing of children (0 to 14 years) and the youth (15 to 24 years) within its communities and to nurture and create a safe environment to support growth that values their presence in the community.
- (b) LGANT supports the coordination of effort across agencies to improve efficiencies and effectiveness in the delivery of children and youth programs in the Northern Territory.
- (c) LGANT advocates that local government plays an active role in promoting a positive image and profile of children and youth and their visibility and contribution to community life.
- (d) LGANT advocates that governments and their agencies provide the environment for equal access to mental and physical health advancement for children and youth of the Northern Territory.

- (e) LGANT supports an inclusive society where the views of the youth are encouraged and legitimises their ideas and concerns in local council governance structures and processes.
- (f) LGANT advocates to all levels of government and the community that programs supporting youth contribute to the workplace development and provides improved life choices and opportunities.
- (g) LGANT advocates for the equal access to primary, secondary and tertiary education opportunities for children and youth in the Northern Territory.
- (h) LGANT advocates for the eradication of homelessness affecting children and youth in the community.

2.14. Aboriginal Disadvantage^{xiii}

- (a) LGANT is committed to the principles, partnerships, priority areas and actions within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap signed July 2020 by the Australian Local Government Association on behalf of its members.

3. Finance, Taxation and Economic Reform

3.1. Access to Taxation Receipts

- (a) LGANT supports access by Local Government to an equitable share of the general taxation revenue available to Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments to meet its roles and functions within the Australian Federal system of government. (Amendment approved at Executive meeting 31 July 2009 - Agenda item 6.2)
- (b) LGANT believes that problems resulting from the vertical fiscal imbalance in the Australian Federal system of government must be addressed cooperatively by all three spheres of government to ensure that the Northern Territory councils and the Territory Government receive a fair share of Federal taxation revenue.

3.2. Revenue Sources^{xiv}

- (a) LGANT supports councils having autonomy and flexibility in determining sources of local revenue.
- (b) ^{xv}LGANT calls on the Territory Government to amend the *Local Government Act* so that the provisions *relating to conditionally rateable land are removed.*"
- (c) LGANT supports councils having the power to undertake their own business enterprises and commercial activities and using the profits from these as supplementary sources of revenue.
- (d) LGANT supports the entitlement of Local Government to make a charge for the use of council owned and controlled land where utilities (eg gas, electricity, and telecommunications) carry on their business with a view to making a surplus or profit.
- (e) LGANT supports councils having access to revenue growth, from own-source revenues and government grant revenues to enable them to fulfil their obligations to communities. (Adopted at the AGM October 2006)
- (f) LGANT calls on the Northern Territory Government to grant stamp duty exemption for councils.

3.3. Commonwealth Revenue Sharing^{xvi}

- (a) LGANT supports a fair share of general taxation revenue being allocated to Local Government.
- (b) LGANT supports general revenue sharing grants remaining untied.

- (c) LGANT supports the Northern Territory Local Government Grants Commission as the most appropriate mechanism to distribute revenue sharing funds to councils.
- (d) LGANT supports the allocation of Federal Assistance Grants (FAG's) to Local Government in the NT on the same basis as the Commonwealth provides funds to the Northern Territory Government.

3.4. Specific Purpose Grants

- (a) LGANT supports the Commonwealth and Territory Governments continuing to provide specific purpose grants to councils in order to achieve particular national or Territory objectives. These grants must not be at the expense of untied revenue sharing.

3.5. Inter Government Concessions

- (a) LGANT calls on the Commonwealth and Territory Governments to ensure that funds available for disaster relief flow to those in need without delay.
- (b) LGANT believes that Commonwealth and Territory Government business enterprises should pay normal Local Government rates and charges directly to the council(s) concerned.
- (c) LGANT supports councils not having to subsidise Commonwealth and Territory concessions to pensioners or other beneficiaries.

3.6. Service Provision for Other Governments

- (a) LGANT does not support councils collecting revenue or generally providing services for other spheres of government unless all the costs (including on costs) involved are fully reimbursed.

3.7. Financial Accountability^{xvii}

- (a) LGANT recognises the responsibility of Local Government to be fully accountable to the community.
- (b) LGANT recognises that it has a leadership role in promoting reforms which benefit Local Government.

3.8. Financial Reporting and Grant Acquittals

- (a) LGANT calls on the Territory and Australian Government's to agree on a standardised report format for acquitting data applicable to their grants so that:
 - standardised templates (encompassing common periodic reporting) for grant acquittals can be accepted across agencies;
 - council personnel can access templates online to generate reports;
 - data transfer is possible between council business systems and agreed templates;
 - the costs of acquitting grants for all spheres of government is reduced;
 - there are common audit procedures for acquitting grants, and
 - the terms, conditions and definitions to do with grants are standardised.

(Policy adopted at Executive meeting 31 July 2009 - Agenda item 6.2)

3.9. Automated Processing

- (a) LGANT supports to increase efficiency with council business transactions. This includes having systems that are:

1. easy to use, flexible and reliable
2. capable of bringing about confidentiality and information security
3. capable of supporting different programs and projects through data collection and bulk uploads of information in different formats

- (b) LGANT supports IT infrastructure in local government being configured and supported to meet the requirements of the Australian and Territory Governments. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 19 May 2008 Item 10.2.2)

3.10. Performance Indicators

- (a) LGANT supports councils developing performance indicators for key service areas as a means of improving efficiency, performance and accountability.

3.11. Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments

- (a) LGANT supports remote area tax concessions and payments so long as they are:
1. redrawn to reflect contemporary settlement patterns
 2. make use of Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) in Australia
 3. indexed and there is a review of the amount which is backed by a Commonwealth policy rationale comprising:
 1. **Equity**: to compensate residents of remote areas for the various disadvantages of living in those areas.
 2. **Regional development**: to actively encourage individuals to move to and work in remote regions.
 3. **Industry-specific assistance**: to support industries located in remote areas by mitigating the higher costs of doing business (for example, freight).
- (b) LGANT does not support the eligibility of remote area tax concessions and payment being determined on the basis of income levels given the difficulty Councils have in attracting staff to the Northern Territory.

4. Transport and Infrastructure ^{xviii}

- (a) LGANT seeks a priority ongoing commitment by the Commonwealth Government to capital works programs for the provision of essential infrastructure in regional Australia.
- (b) LGANT supports the Commonwealth and Territory Governments subsidising appropriate public transport in remote areas, recognising especially the transport disadvantages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

4.1. Roads ^{xix}

- (a) LGANT calls upon the Australian and Northern Territory governments to provide financial assistance to local government to enable it to undertake a study which would:
- determine road hierarchies and standards for local roads
 - confirm the status and length of local roads and categorise them on the basis of their hierarchy and therefore significance
 - record road data including mapping in a GPS database
 - provide evidence to support the need for additional funds needed to maintain and upgrade the local road network in the NT. (Policy adopted at Executive Meeting 16 March 2009 – Item 10.2.1)

4.2. Aviation^{xx}

- (a) LGANT supports action by the Commonwealth Government to ensure that regional airline networks will be protected in the conditions of sale of major airports and that councils affected by such change are consulted to ensure that the transport, amenity and environmental impacts on local communities are minimised.
- (b) LGANT supports the Commonwealth subsidising regional, remote and jointly operated airstrips and associated services as a community service obligation.
- (c) LGANT does not support the transfer of responsibility of barge landings, boat ramps and airstrips to local government principally because:
 1. they entail classes of infrastructure that are, and have always been, the rightful responsibility of the Northern Territory Government
 2. local government does not have the financial capacity to manage all of them sustainably
 3. the particular infrastructure of barge landings and airstrips is not infrastructure that local government generally has responsibility for. (Policy adopted at GM 3 April 2014 – Item 7.3)
- (d) LGANT supports all airstrips being upgraded to all-weather status in all local government areas in the Territory.

4.3. Rail

- (a) LGANT supports the Commonwealth, and Territory Governments expanding an efficient and effective railway system as part of an integrated transport planning strategy.

4.4. Telecommunications

- (a) LGANT calls on the Commonwealth Government to recognise the concern of local communities regarding the detrimental impact on the amenity of the urban and rural environments caused by the indiscriminate installation of telecommunication installations, including towers and overhead cables.
- (b) LGANT seeks legislation requirements to ensure mobile telephone and Internet services are extended to all parts of Australia as a community service obligation.
- (c) LGANT supports access to untimed local calls for all Territorians.
- (d) LGANT supports the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's charter reflecting a commitment to:
 - delivering broadcasting services in rural and regional areas in each State and Territory in Australia
 - ensuring journalistic work occurs in rural and regional Australia
 - the establishment of a Rural and Regional Advisory Council. (Policy adopted at Executive meeting 27 March 2017)

5. Economic and Regional Development

- (a) LGANT recognises that soundly based economic and regional development is fundamental to the wellbeing of communities in the NT.
- (b) LGANT supports councils fostering economic and regional development through a range of measures such as:
 - supporting local business
 - providing essential infrastructure and services, including through joint ventures
 - identifying investment opportunities

- promoting tourism
- promoting cultural and recreational resources as an incentive for regional investment

on the proviso that councils have the revenue (grants or own-source) to support such activities.

- (c) LGANT calls on the Commonwealth and Territory Governments to recognise and support the role of Local Government in regional and economic development.
- (d) LGANT recognises that where developments impact on Indigenous cultural heritage, councils must exercise leadership in ensuring that local Aboriginal needs, aspirations and cultural and spiritual values are taken into account.
- (e) LGANT supports the maintenance and extension of digital networks as a means of facilitating and promoting participation in economic and regional development initiatives.

5.1. Commonwealth Programs

- (a) LGANT supports labour market programs that enhance local employment and regional development.
- (b) LGANT believes that substantial additional Commonwealth funding is required to support effective regional development efforts.
- (c) LGANT supports measures that lead to:
 1. the decentralisation of government services and offices into regional areas
 2. migration and resettlement initiatives that focus on regional employment.

5.2. Northern Development ^{xxi}

LGANT supports and promotes policies aimed at safeguarding the continued viability and opportunities for development of rural regions and communities in the Northern Territory.

5.3. Unemployment

- (a) LGANT supports councils playing an active role wherever possible in employment programs, either as a facilitator or employer.

5.4. Tourism^{xxii}

- (a) LGANT recognises tourism is of major benefit to the Northern Territory economy and supports councils getting involved in activities that support the industry.

5.5. Time Zones

- (a) LGANT supports the concept of rationalisation and simplification of time zones in Australia in a way that would benefit the conduct of business and government and the lives of ordinary citizens.

6. Urban Affairs

6.1. Land Use Agreements

- (a) LGANT supports councils having leases on Aboriginal land for individual lots on which it has care control and management of assets and services.
- (b) LGANT supports development assessment processes being undertaken on Aboriginal land which equates with the processes undertaken in other parts of the Northern Territory including the establishment of one or more planning authorities under the *Planning Act*.

(c) LGANT supports planning authorities having representation which includes:

- local governments
- land councils
- traditional owners
- the Northern Territory government

(Adopted at Executive Meeting December 2004 – Agenda Item 10.1.2)

(d) LGANT supports the principles of township leases as being those that provide to councils:

- long term security of tenure for council assets
- continuity of service delivery
- similar terms and conditions for like properties in towns
- similar lease rentals charged to the Territory Government for its properties
- peppercorn rentals for open space, recreational and cultural facilities, local roads and waste management facilities.

(Adopted at General Meeting November 2009 – Agenda Item 7.7)

(e) LGANT supports councils being given access to building information that the Territory government holds in order for them to adequately perform their own functions in respect of levying rates, planning infrastructure and undertaking emergency management.

6.2. Aboriginal Living Areas^{xxiii}

(a) LGANT supports councils providing services and facilities in Aboriginal Living Areas on condition that councils are able to function, implement their council plans and formulate policies with the same degree of autonomy as elsewhere within their council areas and:

- the Territory and Federal governments upgrade infrastructure (including roads, drainage and street lighting) as set out in Subdivision Development Guidelines adopted by councils.
- if councils obtain title to land over which they have care, control and management of infrastructure, buildings and service delivery
- individual allotments are leased and become rateable
- council by-laws are capable of being administered
- Councils are involved in the development of Northern Territory policy and plans that deal with infrastructure and supporting services in town camps including roads, street lighting, footpaths, open space and other associated community infrastructure and services.

(Adopted at Executive Meeting 21 February 2019)

6.3. The Northern Territory Planning System. ^{xxiv}

(a) LGANT supports the NT *Planning Act* being amended so that it is compulsory for the Territory Government agency responsible for land use planning to provide information in a timely manner so that councils can adequately plan for infrastructure, social development and service delivery requirements in response to new property developments. (Adopted at Executive Meeting 15 March 2010 – Agenda Item 6.7)

(b) LGANT requests the Territory Government make land available in a timely manner to enable local governments to jointly establish regional waste management facilities that

comply with legislation. (Adopted at Executive Meeting 15 March 2010 – Agenda Item 6.7)

- (c) That LGANT support and promote the use of the “Healthy, Spaces and Places – A national guide to designing places for healthy living as best practice” in councils Planning Guidelines. (Adopted at General Meeting November 2013 – Agenda Item 7.2)

7. Environment^{xxv xxvi}

- (a) LGANT recognises there is growing community demand for councils to devote substantial resources to environmental protection and management.

7.1. Role in National Policy^{xxvii}

- (a) LGANT supports the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- (b) LGANT will promote the importance of regional cooperation between councils, as well as more effective liaison with industry and community organisations, as a means of enhancing its own capacity to deal effectively with environmental issues and contribute to national policy.
- (c) LGANT supports the traditional owners of land being consulted and actively involved in environmental planning and management processes.

7.2. Natural Environment

- (a) LGANT supports Local Government being consulted concerning community and environmental impacts when areas are considered for World Heritage listing.
- (b) LGANT supports an effective national effort to control feral cats and other pests.
- (c) LGANT supports effective Territory efforts to control native animal pests within urban areas. (Policy adopted at GM October 2003 - Item 8.3)
- (d) LGANT supports land in ownership of the Commonwealth or Northern Territory Governments which suffers from environmental degradation being restored to at least the same standards these governments would expect of the private sector.

7.3. Built Environment

- (a) LGANT supports the need for more effective action to maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment.
- (b) LGANT supports a national approach to minimise risks associated with the production, storage, transport and disposal of scheduled wastes.
- (c) LGANT supports councils undertaking energy production, implementing energy efficiencies and making greater use of renewable energies to the extent they are able. (Policy updated at General Meeting 8 November 2018 – Item 7.10)^{xxviii}

7.4. Cultural Heritage

- (a) LGANT supports programs to conserve and manage features of social, cultural, architectural, historic and Aboriginal significance.

7.5. Waste Management Hierarchy

- (a) LGANT supports the management of waste within the framework of the following priorities:
- avoiding the creation of waste (reduce)
 - minimise the creation of waste (reduce)

- the reuse of post-production and post-consumer products without any change to the form or composition of those products (reuse)
- the recycling of organic waste and post-production and post-consumer goods into new products (recycling)
- the responsible disposal of waste to environmentally acceptable means (disposal).

7.6. Waste Management

- (a) LGANT supports councils with communities of populations less than 1,000 adopting the final Better Practice Guidelines, as developed by LGANT, as a standard operational manual for waste management in those areas. (*Policy adopted at Executive Meeting 21 September 2009 - Item 10.2*)

7.7. NT, State and Federal Government Responsibilities^{xxix}

LGANT strongly supports the introduction of a 'Cash for Containers' program as a national litter control mechanism on the proviso that councils can be financially supported to implement it.

7.8. Industry Responsibilities

- (a) LGANT supports the principle that those who create waste should take full responsibility for that waste. In the case of industry, Local Government supports the imposition of legislation, regulations and incentive schemes which will compel industry to:
- introduce policies which will enable sectors of industry to reach mandatory waste reduction targets within a specified time frame
 - accept “cradle to grave” responsibility for the products, waste and litter it produces, at both the production and post-consumer stages.
 - adopt “closed loop” processes for the products and packaging it creates
 - reduce the unnecessary packaging of goods
 - use at least a specified percentage of recycled material in their production processes
 - use only packaging materials which are capable of being recycled and have been marked as recycled material.

7.9. Recycling and Separation

- (a) LGANT supports the following:
- The use of financial incentives such as the NSW Council Recycling Rebate Scheme as a means of reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.
 - The concept of free disposal of separated domestic vegetation and green waste at landfills where this waste will be recycled for domestic and commercial use.
 - The development of domestic and export markets for recycled products and recovered materials.
 - Encouragement and assistance of research and development projects to enable the greater use of recycled products.
 - Internal purchasing policies which maximise the use of responsibly packaged and recycled goods.
 - Regular, regional industry-sponsored chemical collection campaigns which ensure the environmentally responsible disposal of chemicals.

- Community education to assist the public in reducing waste.

7.10. Waste Disposal

- LGANT supports public control of landfills and other waste disposal facilities so as to ensure that waste disposal and management complements an overall waste minimisation strategy.
- LGANT believes that landfill and other disposal facilities should maximise their efforts to separate and divert materials for reuse and recycling.
- LGANT believes that waste disposal guidelines should ultimately ensure that environmental quality and public health are not compromised.
- Licence and approval regulations/requirements for landfills and other waste disposal facilities should:
 - be sufficiently flexible to account for site characteristics (such as permeability, isolation, the assimilation capacity of the surrounding environment and cumulative effects);
 - be performance based; and
 - reflect consideration and assessment of the likely costs of compliance.

7.11. Public and Environmental Health^{xxx}

- LGANT does not support councils acting as enforcement agencies under Public and Environmental Health legislation.
- LGANT supports councils adopting policies which:
 - ban smoking in local government buildings and open space areas
 - require the erection of signage to indicate that the areas are smoke free
 - ensuring that events run or sponsored by councils are smoke free.

(Adopted at General Meeting November 2013 – Agenda Item 7.6)
- LGANT supports councils using glyphosate products so long as:
 1. there are no other practicable and affordable control measures that could be employed
 2. councils comply with the safety data sheets associated with its use
 3. there are no compelling legal and insurance reasons to stop using it
 4. the regulators continue to support its use
 5. it is reasonable and practicable to avoid its use in areas such as playgrounds and parks. *(Adopted at General Meeting 8 November 2018 – Agenda Item 7.6)^{xxxii}*

7.12. Climate Change^{xxxii}

- LGANT recognises that the global climate is changing as a consequence of increased concentrations of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, and that these increased concentrations are largely the result of human activities and industrialisation.
- LGANT supports councils addressing climate change in their strategic planning frameworks because of the legal, indemnity, budgetary, asset management, infrastructure, planning and environmental implications for councils.

- (c) LGANT calls upon the Federal and Territory governments to develop appropriate policy and legislative frameworks to allow councils to make decisions and responses to climate change without prejudice or undue risk exposure.
- (d) LGANT supports councils receiving appropriate levels of funding and resourcing assistance to meet urgent climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements for the short and long term protection and benefit of their communities.
- (e) LGANT calls on the Federal and Northern Territory Governments to fund Adaptation Plans for the whole of the NT.
- (f) LGANT calls on the Federal and Northern Territory governments to include a review of the 2008 Adaptation Plans for the Top End regional councils.
- (g) LGANT advocates for culturally sensitive Adaptation Plans to incorporate climate action plans that assure an equitable and sustainable future for generations economically, environmentally and ethically.
- (h) LGANT supports the Northern Territory Government to adopt a climate policy of net zero emissions by 2050, including the transition towards 50% renewable energy by 2030.
- (i) LGANT advocates for its member councils to include in their procurement policies consideration for waste, recycling and the circular economy.

7.13. Water Conservation

- (a) LGANT supports councils taking water conservation measures including through increased water efficiency, landscaping design and community education. (Adopted General Meeting 8 November 2018 – Item 7.13)^{xxxiii}

8. International Links ^{xxxiv}

- (a) LGANT supports the World Wide Declaration on Local Self Government adopted by the International Union of Local Authorities, and calls on the Commonwealth Government to:
 - continue its support for the Declaration
 - promote adoption of the Declaration by the United Nations
 - abide by the principles of the Declaration.
- (b) LGANT supports closer relations being developed with local governments in other countries, particularly in the Asia Pacific region.
- (c) LGANT supports the development of Sister City links between communities.

ⁱ Policy updated 1 December 2016 GM Item 7.8

ⁱⁱ Policy updated 16 August 2016 Exec meeting Item 6.5 removed

(c) LGANT supports the CouncilBIZ constitution being changed to allow:

- councils and LGANT to determine their nominated representatives on the board of CouncilBiz
- elected members to attend meetings of CouncilBIZ as observers when they are not the nominated representatives on CouncilBIZ or LGANT.

(d) LGANT supports councils approving delegations to their nominated representatives on CouncilBIZ in light of the potential for costs being incurred outside of council budgetary processes. (Policy adopted at general meeting 25 March 2010)

ⁱⁱⁱ Policy updated 15 March 2016 Exec meeting Item 6.5

^{iv} Policy updated 1 December 2016 General meeting Item 7.10

^v Adopted at Executive Meeting 20 August 2012 – Item 6.2; Policy updated at General Meeting April 2014 – Item 7.6

^{vi} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting (see items 10.1 & 10.2) from

- (a) LGANT recognises that public housing is a function of state and territory governments and that local government and associations are service providers on behalf of those governments.
- (a) LGANT supports Local Government cooperation with Commonwealth and Territory Governments to ensure that communities have access to secure, affordable and appropriate housing.
- (b) LGANT supports the involvement of Local Government in the formulation of regional housing policies and programs, and in the negotiation of relevant inter-governmental agreements.
- (c) LGANT supports housing asset management programs being implemented by councils. *(Policy adopted at GM October 2003 - Item 6.9)*
- (d) LGANT supports a coordinated approach to housing development across the Local Government sector. *(Policy adopted at GM October 2003 - Item 6.9)*
- (e) LGANT supports essential service infrastructure being developed in a timely fashion so as not to delay housing development. *(Policy adopted at GM October 2003-Item 6.9)*
- (f) LGANT supports councils with capacity to carry out maintenance and construction of houses which leads to local employment and training opportunities. *(Policy adopted Executive meeting 5 June 2006 Item 10.1.2)*
- (g) LGANT supports councils that do not wish to, or do not have the capacity for, maintaining and constructing houses to transfer the function to the Territory Government. *(Policy adopted Executive meeting 5 June 2006 Item 10.1.3)*
- (h) LGANT calls upon Territory Housing to *(Policy adopted at Executive meeting 8 September 2008 - Item 10.2)*:
 1. Have regard to the unique circumstances facing Shire councils with housing as they seek to establish and consolidate their headquarters operations, particularly for the key personnel of CEO, Director Corporate Services, Director Technical Services, Director Community Services and Housing Manager.
 2. make available Government employee Housing and give recognition and preference to the above personnel given the important relationship that shires *will have with Territory Housing in helping to maintain Territory Housing property in remote areas.* *(Amended at Executive Meeting 16 March 2009 – Item 10.2.2)*
 3. provide certainty with tenancies for the above personnel for the next three years in the major centres of Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Jabiru and Tennant Creek.
 4. maintain close contact with the shires over their need for industry Housing so that the shires can successfully deploy and accommodate key personnel and thereby meet the Territory government's policy agenda in respect of local government reform and public housing in the short term.

^{vii} Policy updated 1 October 2013 Exec meeting (10.4) – consolidated clauses relating to funding and services of libraries

^{viii} Policy updated 8 November 2018 General meeting

^{ix} Policy updated 21 May 2013 Exec Meeting, removed

- (i) LGANT proactively works towards ensuring that the local government workforce in the Northern Territory has measures in place to bring about stability in employment through best practice recruitment, mentoring and retention procedures and strategies. *(Policy adopted at Executive meeting 22 May 2005 Item 10.2.1)*

^x Policy endorsed at 20 September 2016 Executive meeting

^{xi} Policy endorsed at 12 June 2018 Executive meeting

^{xii} Policy endorsed at 19 October 2020 Executive meeting

^{xiii} Adopted General Meeting 22 April 2020

^{xiv} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, removed

- (e) LGANT supports legislative impediments being removed and local government boundaries extended to allow local governments to charge rates on properties that are leased within their boundaries including mining, agricultural and pastoral leases. *(Adopted at Executive Meeting October 2005 – Agenda Item 13.1 – 7.8)*

^{xv} Policy updated 1 October 2013 Exec meeting – removed deadline

^{xvi} Policy updated 4 April 2015 General meeting, removed

- (d) LGANT supports the recommendation of the National Audit Commission that Local Government FAG's be absorbed into State / Territory FAG's provided the NT Government passes on all Local Government monies received.

^{xvii} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, removed

- (d) LGANT is opposed to legislated compulsory competitive tendering.

^{xviii} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, 15 March 2016 Exec meeting Item 6.5

^{xix} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, 15 March 2016 Exec meeting Item 6.5

^{xx} Policy Updated 15 March 2016 Exec meeting Item 6.5

^{xxi} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, removed

- (a) LGANT supports the completion and implementation of an effective strategy to address regional development issues and locational disadvantage north of the 26th Parallel.

^{xxii} Policy updated 15 March 2016 Exec meeting Item 6.5

^{xxiii} Policy updated 21 February 2019 Exec meeting Item 6.5

^{xxiv} Policy updated 15 March 2016 Exec meeting Item 6.5

^{xxv} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, removed

- (a) LGANT supports greater financial resources being allocated by the Commonwealth and Territory Governments to resource environmental outcomes sought as part of national environment agendas.

^{xxvi} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, removed

7.5 Waste Management

- (a) LGANT members endorsed a Waste Policy in February 1997 which represents an agreed policy position, from which priorities for actions for all levels of government can be effectively determined and negotiated.

^{xxvii} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, removed

- (d) LGANT supports councils preparing Agenda 21 plans.

^{xxviii} Policy updated 8 November 2018 – Item 7.10

^{xxix} Policy updated 28 June 2010 Exec meeting from

- (a) LGANT strongly supports the introduction of Container Deposit Legislation (CDL) as a litter control mechanism.
- (b) LGANT believes that the Northern Territory, State and Federal governments should introduce regulatory and economic instruments to reduce litter and to enable a reasonable waste reduction target of 25% reduction of waste to landfill (based on 1990 figures) to be achieved by the year 2000. In addition to industry controls outlined below, these instruments should include:
1. Different taxing or tariffs on virgin material and recycled material.
 2. Container Deposit Legislation.
 3. A NT levy on aluminium cans, glass beverage containers, flavoured milk cartons and fruit juice containers and other materials to fund public education projects, freight subsidies for recyclable materials, infrastructure requirements for urban and regional recycling storage facilities and recycling rebates for Territory councils.

^{xxx} Policy updated 28 June 2010 Exec meeting from

LGANT does not support councils acting as enforcement agencies under Public and Environmental Health legislation due to:

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1. a lack of experience by local government in managing such functions previously
 2. the difficulty in employing relevant professional officers
 3. the risk associated with performing the service to a revenue positive level

(Policy adopted by LGANT Executive Committee 28 May 2007 Item 6.5)

xxxⁱ Policy Adopted at General Meeting 8 November 2018 – Item 7.4

xxxⁱⁱ Policy endorsed at GM 12 November 2015 and 5 November 2020

xxxⁱⁱⁱ Policy adopted at General Meeting 8 November 2018 – Item 7.13

xxx^{iv} Policy updated 26 July 2010 Exec meeting, removed

- (c) Members do not support LGANT's continuing involvement with IULA-ASPAC.
- (d) LGANT supports the Northern Territory Government providing financial support for the promotion of international links by Local Government.