



## Council Member Training and Conference Report Form

**Name of Council Member:** Cr. Shirley Halls

**Name of Training/Conference:** LGA/AGM

**Date(s) of Training/Conference:** 21/11/25

Was this a group training session? ☐ No ☒ Yes

Was the training provided by the LGA or ALGA? Yes ☐

Please provide a brief overview of the issues discussed at the training/conference:

Housing trends and needs for next 5 yrs.

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Please provide a brief overview of any information you received at the training or conference that may be of assistance to the Council:

SEE Attached

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In light of the training you received, do you believe there are steps that the Council may undertake to advance the Playford Community Vision 2043 and/or Councils Strategic Plan? If so, what steps

Council needs to be more proactive in checking and insisting on what the community needs are for developers in Playford

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**Signature:**

*S. Halls*

**Date:**

*3.2.26*

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Before using a printed copy, verify that it is the current version.



## Council Member Training and Conference Report Form

*\*This will be included in the Council Member Training and Conferences Report Register. This register is made available for public inspection*

## **LGA - Conference 21/11/25. Minister's address (via video)**

**Hon. Joe Szakacs MP**  
**Minister for Trade and Investment**  
**Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science**  
**Minister for Local Government**  
**Minister for Veterans Affairs**

Minister Joe Szakacs MP addressed the Local Government Association (LGA) conference, emphasizing the importance of state and local governments in addressing the housing crisis and maximising economic opportunities. He praised the passage of the Local Government Elections Bill, which aims to strengthen election integrity and align voting rules across all levels of government. Szakacs highlighted the role of local councils in economic growth and land management, and the establishment of a new coordinator general to support the sector. He also acknowledged the LGA's role in the state and local government accord and the modernisation of the community engagement charter to enhance public trust and participation in decision-making.

### **Action Items**

- Continue to work on the housing crisis through the state and local government accord.
- Implement the new community engagement charter to modernise and improve consultation with constituents.
- Maintain high standards of integrity and public trust in the local government sector.

He Outlined the Following in

### **Minister's Address on Housing and Local Government**

- He mentions being in the Asian region and delegating the role to Minister for Housing and Development, Nick Champion, highlighting the importance of state and local governments in solving the housing crisis.
- The passage of the Local Government Elections Bill through Parliament is celebrated, with thanks given to those who provided input and submissions during the consultation process.
- Then discusses the need to strengthen election integrity, mentioning recent court decisions and changes to voting eligibility in South Australia.
- The importance of local government in economic growth and the role of local councils in freeing up land and partnering with the government to solve the housing crisis is emphasized.
- The establishment of a new coordinator general and the resolution of the community engagement charter are highlighted, with a focus on modernising council consultation processes and maintaining public trust.

## **LGA Minister's address**

**Hon. Nick Champion MP**  
**Minister for Housing and**  
**Urban Development**  
**Minister for Housing Infrastructure**  
**Minister for Planning**

Hon. Nick Champion MP addressed the LGA Minister's address, emphasizing the transformation of South Australia's economy from a surplus of housing in the 1980s to a housing shortage today. He highlighted the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan, which aims to create 100,000 homes over 30 years, and the development of infrastructure schemes. Champion praised local government's role in heritage protections, open space creation, and tree canopy reforms. He stressed the importance of collaboration between state and local governments to ensure proper infrastructure provision, citing examples like the Concordia suburb and the Northern park lands. He concluded by urging proactive management of growth to avoid future legacy issues.

### **Action Items**

- Work with local councils on the actions and delivery of the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan
- Continue collaborating with local councils on the development of regional plans for the state's regions
- Finalise the establishment of the Northern Parklands Trust and work with Playford and Port Adelaide councils on its implementation
- Develop and apply infrastructure schemes, like the one for Concordia, in partnership with local councils to ensure upfront provision of critical infrastructure
- Address legacy infrastructure issues, particularly stormwater, in areas like Playford in collaboration with local councils

### **Acknowledgment and Welcome**

- And mentions Cliff's welcome to country, highlighting the geography of Adelaide and the early contact between indigenous people and colonial forebears.
- Notes the historical significance of a quarry on the banks of the Torrens, which provided stone for the first Parliament House.
- He expresses gratitude to Ross and the GA team for their engagement and mutual obligation in working together for the future.

### **Economic Transformation and Housing Challenges**

- He reflects on South Australia's economic transformation from the 1980s to the present, noting the shift from a surplus of housing to a housing shortage.
- Then discusses the structural adjustment caused by the closure of Holden in 2016 and the relocation of various industries.
- Highlights the rapid growth in the economy driven by universities, high-tech industry, and minerals exploration.
- Notes the difficulty young people face in finding jobs and the government's policy initiatives requiring local government cooperation.

### **Policy Initiatives and Infrastructure Development**

- He mentions the development of the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan and infrastructure schemes as key policy initiatives.
- Then discusses the use of strategic code amendments and rezoning, and the creation of open space at scale, particularly through the northern park lands.
- Highlights the collaboration with local government on heritage protections, such as protecting 480 homes from demolition in City Prospect.
- Notes the reforms to tree canopy and the use of AI and technology to improve efficiency in the local government sector.

### **Greater Adelaide Regional Plan and Local Government Collaboration**

- He outlined the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan, which includes 100,000 homes over 30 years and employment lands.
- And emphasized the importance of local government cooperation in delivering the plan's 56 actions.
- Then discusses the creation of a new delivery mechanism at the state government level and the need for local government efforts.
- Highlights the critical infrastructure required for housing growth, such as stormwater, water, and sewer systems.

### **Regional Plans and Open Space Development**

- He mentions the development of regional plans for the state's regions, which outline growth, land, infrastructure, housing, and jobs.
- Then discusses the importance of open space at scale, particularly in the northern suburbs of Adelaide.
- Highlights the creation of the Northern park lands, which will provide 1000 hectares of public open space.
- Then acknowledges the proactive participation of local councils in the establishment of the park lands and the legislation critical for its delivery.

### **Infrastructure Challenges and Solutions**

- Then discusses the critical issue of infrastructure provision as a key element of the housing crisis.
- Highlighting the importance of stormwater, sewer, and water systems, noting the historical context of infrastructure development.
- Mentioning the development of infrastructure schemes and the need for local government involvement.
- He emphasizes the importance of leadership at both state and local levels in planning and delivering infrastructure.

### **Conclusion and Future Plans**

- Then concludes by emphasizing the need for local government as partners in managing growth and facing housing challenges proactively.
- He encourages local government to visit the office with their plans and highlights the importance of managing growth full-on.
- Then expresses a desire to build great communities without legacy issues and to ensure that future planning does not leave the same problems for future generations.
- Thanks, the audience and expresses optimism for the future collaboration and growth of South Australia.

### **LGA - Dr Elizabeth Farrelly**

**Award-winning writer, columnist,  
academic and broadcaster**

Dr. Elizabeth Farrelly discussed the interconnected crises of housing affordability, climate change, and trust in democracy, emphasizing the need for cities that embody moral and spiritual values. She highlighted the Better Cities Initiative's mission to empower citizens to create liveable, fairer cities. Farrelly criticised sprawl and advocated for a ban on greenfield development, citing Adelaide's average commuter time of 59 minutes and median house price of \$935,000. She proposed citizens' assemblies as a more inclusive and effective way to engage the community in urban planning, citing successful examples from Ireland, France, and Japan.

### **Action Items**

- Explore the concept of citizens' assemblies further.
- Consider implementing a permanent citizens' assembly in Adelaide, similar to the one in Paris.
- Investigate successful examples of citizens' assemblies in other cities and countries, such as Ireland, France, and Japan.

## Introduction and Acknowledgements

- Dr Elizabeth Farrelly is introduced and highlights the intersecting nature of their portfolio with local government.
- Dr. Elizabeth Farrelly has an extensive background in architecture, philosophy, and urban planning.
- Her achievements, including her roles as a former city councillor, director of the National Trust New South Wales, and her current positions as a columnist and founder of the Better Cities Initiative.
- Dr. Farrelly addresses her book "Killing Sydney," highlighting its focus on moral and spiritual values in urban planning.
- She underscores the necessity for cities to reflect our moral, psychological, and spiritual values, noting the paradox of modern culture's struggle with liveable cities.
- Dr. Farrelly introduces a Venn diagram that connects housing affordability, climate issues, and trust in democracy, advocating for the Better Cities Initiative.
- She discusses climate change effects, such as European heatwaves, and criticises urban sprawl, promoting a ban on greenfield development.
- Presenting data from Adelaide, Dr. Farrelly critiques the housing market's investment-driven nature, exacerbating affordability issues.
- She introduces the "missing middle" concept, advocating for manageable, sustainable urban alternatives to sprawl and high-rises.
- Addressing democratic trust crises, Dr. Farrelly emphasizes the importance of involving citizens through deliberative processes, including citizens' assemblies.
- She critiques contemporary city-making techniques, contrasting them with historical approaches and the prioritisation of public spaces over structures.
- Dr. Farrelly explores the effects of neoliberalism on urban inequality, stressing the significance of core values such as truth, beauty, and justice in urban development.
- Dr. Farrelly emphasizes the significance of public spaces in traditional cities, urging their prioritisation in contemporary urban planning.
- She critiques the prevailing focus on construction and infrastructure in modern cities, advocating for a human-centred approach to city-making.
- The concept of the "missing middle" is introduced as a viable solution to the housing crisis, providing an alternative to both urban sprawl and high-rise developments for enhanced liveability and sustainability.
- Dr. Farrelly shares successful urban planning examples that highlight the importance of public spaces and active community participation.
- The idea of citizens' assemblies is presented as a method to involve the community in decision-making processes, facilitating improved outcomes.
- Key principles of citizens' assemblies include random selection, provision of time, adequate compensation, access to information, and the delegation of authority.
- She outlines the advantages of citizens' assemblies, such as enhanced community involvement, improved decision-making capabilities, and fostering cultural transformation.
- Successful instances of citizens' assemblies around the globe are noted, illustrating their positive impact on policy and community engagement initiatives.

## Conclusion and Call to Action

- Dr. Farrelly concludes by emphasizing the need for a cultural change in city-making to achieve cities that embody our deepest values.
- She calls for a more thoughtful and inclusive approach to urban planning, involving citizens in decision-making and prioritising public spaces and community engagement.
- Dr. Farrelly encourages the audience to consider the broader economic and cultural systems that influence urban planning and to advocate for better policies and practices.
- She thanks the audience and expresses hope for a more liveable and sustainable future for our cities.

## LGA - Financial Sustainability Panel Facilitated by Davin Lambert

**George Kamencak**  
Executive Director, Monitoring and  
Evaluation, ESCOSA

**Rob Donaldson**  
Chair, Local Government Grant Commission  
**Tim Pfeiffer**  
CEO, Berri Barmera Council

- The Financial Sustainability Panel, facilitated by Davin Lambert, convened to enhance local government financial sustainability in South Australia.
- Rob Donaldson discussed the Local Government Grants Commission's emphasis on untied grants and reviews of revenue-raising methodologies, especially for local roads.

- Tim Pfeiffer shared insights from Berri Barmera Council regarding asset management plans and the critical role of accurate data.
- George Kamencak stressed the necessity for councils to grasp legislative requirements, long-term financial planning, and asset management.
- The panel reached a consensus on the significance of collective advocacy, precise data, and prioritising the renewal of existing infrastructure for achieving financial sustainability.

#### **\*\*Action Items: \*\***

- Explore adjustments to the Grants Commission's methodology for local roads grants to better represent council road networks.
- Evaluate the influence of non-resident ratepayers on revenue-raising capabilities and collaborate with the Grants Commission for necessary modifications.
- Emphasise asset renewal over new infrastructure, pursuing new projects only if grant-funded or facilitating residential growth.
- Provide insights to the LGA on the financial sustainability pilot program, highlighting the importance of validating asset condition data.
- Assist councils in understanding legislative requirements for long-term planning and asset management, aligning these with community needs.

#### **Notes**

- Davin Lambert introduces panel members: George Kamencak, Rob Donaldson, and Tim Pfeiffer, along with the facilitation role he will play.
- Lambert expresses interest in the LGFA's credit lending assessment process and references the JLT public sector risk report highlighting financial sustainability as the top risk for South Australian local governments.
- Emphasizes a multi-faceted approach to financial sustainability focusing on cost-cutting and prioritizing renewal of existing infrastructure over new projects.
- Panel member introductions:
- Rob Donaldson: Chair of the Local Government Grants Commission with extensive local government experience.
- Tim Pfeiffer: CEO of Berri Barmera Council with a private sector background and previous experience as a councillor.
- George Kamencak: Director of Monitoring and Evaluation at the Essential Services Commission, involved in council rate oversight.
- Discussion structure: initial cross-panel questions followed by individual insights.
- Rob Donaldson's insights on financial sustainability:
- Role of the Local Government Grants Commission in distributing untied grants to councils.
- Variability in councils' dependence on financial assistance grants, with some councils receiving less than 5% and others over 20% of their operating revenue.
- Explanation of the Commission's funding distribution methodology aimed at ensuring councils operate at an average level.
- Noted ongoing methodology reviews for local roads grants and revenue-raising capacity assessment..
- The council participated in the LGA's financial sustainability pilot program, leading to reassessment of incorrect initial ratings for the road network with assistance from the LGFA.
- Accurate data collection is crucial, as is the ability to challenge initial assessments, while community consultation is essential for informed asset management and financial sustainability decisions.
- George Kamencak emphasizes the need for understanding legislation related to long-term financial planning and asset management, noting a significant number of councils are non-compliant with these requirements.
- Focus should be on delivering community-valued services, with effective asset management being vital for financial sustainability, including understanding renewal needs and controlling costs.
- Ongoing collaborations among LGA, SCOSA, LGFA, FMG group, and auditors aim to enhance financial sustainability, with an emphasis on asset management planning and training courses for elected members.

#### **LGA - Sponsor address**

##### **Darren Wunderer, State Manager, Hostplus**

Hostplus, managing over \$142 billion in retirement savings for 1.9 million Australians, emphasizes its commitment to strong investment outcomes, transparent service, and member engagement. It has improved its app to industry-leading status and has been providing super education to 11 councils. Hostplus advocates for payday super to address the \$5.7 billion issue of unpaid super annually, particularly benefiting younger workers and women. It also prioritises cybersecurity and has launched MetLife 360 Health, a free health support service for members and their families, aiming to integrate physical and mental well-being into retirement planning.

#### **Commitment to Member Services and Investment Outcomes**

- He highlights that Hostplus manages over \$142 billion in retirement savings for 1.9 million Australians.
- Emphasizes Hostplus's commitment to delivering strong investment outcomes, clear service, and meaningful engagement.
- Mentions various services designed to support members' retirement goals, including expert financial advice, flexible investment options, and digital tools.
- Notes the significant improvement of the Hostplus app, making it an industry leader with further features in development.

### **Super Education and Policy Advocacy**

- And discusses Hostplus's visits to 11 councils in South Australia to provide super education.
- Highlights the importance of addressing unpaid super, which drains approximately \$5.7 billion annually from Australians.
- Advocates for the introduction of payday super, which will benefit younger Australians, part-time workers, lower income earners, and women.
- Mentions the provision of information and workshops to councils, emphasizing the need for fortnightly pay to align with fortnightly super payments.

### **Safeguarding Members' Data and Health Support**

- Speaker 1 stresses the importance of strong cybersecurity to protect members' data and accounts.
- Hostplus continues to invest in smart technology to stay ahead of evolving threats.
- Introduces MetLife 360 Health, a complementary health support service for Hostplus members and their families, accessible at no extra cost.
- The initiative aims to bridge the link between health and retirement, offering preventative health assessments, expert advice, and compassionate support.

### **Partnership with LGA SA and Future Plans**

- Speaker 1 expresses gratitude for the opportunity to present at the conference and values the relationship with LGA SA.
- Mentions the availability of Hostplus representatives during the lunch break for further discussions.
- Highlights the ongoing sharing of information with council HR teams about MetLife 360 Health.
- Notes that the service will likely complement any existing Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) in place at workplaces.

### **Federal Minister's address (via video)**

**Hon Kristy McBain MP**

**Minister for Emergency Management,**

**Minister for Regional Development,**

**Local Government and Territories**

Hon Kristy McBain, Federal Minister for Regional Development, Local Government, and Territories, addressed the Local Government Association of South Australia's conference via video. She acknowledged traditional owners and praised the efforts of local councils in disaster planning, response, and recovery, especially amid rising costs and ongoing challenges like drought and floods. McBain highlighted \$3.4 billion in untied funding for local governments, including \$223 million for South Australian councils. She also mentioned the Australian Government's support for the algal bloom summer plan and emphasized the importance of collaboration in addressing these issues.

### **Action Items**

- Re-refer the matter of local government sustainability to a new inquiry.
- Continue to work closely with the South Australian Government to deliver support for the algal bloom outbreak.

### **Federal Minister's Address to Local Government Association of South Australia**

- Hon Kristy McBain, begins by expressing gratitude for the invitation and acknowledges the traditional owners of the land.
- McBain highlights the importance of the conference's discussion on financial sustainability and the challenges faced by local councils amid rising costs.
- She announces over \$3.4 billion in untied funding for local governments, including \$1.7 billion brought forward, and mentions specific funding for South Australian councils.
- McBain discusses the ongoing challenge of financial sustainability and the government's commitment to re-refer the matter to a new inquiry, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and the role of local councils in disaster planning and response.

### **LGA = Shadow Minister address Sam Telfer MP Shadow Minister for Local Government**

Sam Telfer MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government, addressed the Local Government Association (LGA) in South Australia, emphasizing the importance of bipartisan support and collaboration. He highlighted key legislative issues, including the Northern Park Lands Bill, local government elections reform, and the State Local Government Accord, expressing disappointment over missed opportunities for formal collaboration. Telfer also criticised the community engagement charter, behaviour standards panel, and council rates oversight process, calling for reviews to improve accountability and reduce bureaucratic costs. He advocated for a cost-shifting review to address the financial burden on local councils.

### **Action Items**

- Continue to push both the opposition and the government to put more emphasis on formal collaboration and recognition of the work that local government does.
- Review the Behaviour Standards Panel process to improve outcomes for councils.
- Conduct a cost shifting review to highlight the additional burden placed on local government by state government.

### **Shadow Minister's Address to Local Government Sector**

- He expresses gratitude for the opportunity to connect with the 68 councils across South Australia and acknowledges the LGA's role in policy development.
- And highlights the importance of face-to-face interaction with local government decision-makers and mentions the impact of various pieces of legislation on local government.
- Then discusses the local government elections reform, expressing frustration with the lengthy process and the lack of significant reforms.

### **Challenges in Local Government Legislation**

- Mentions the state local government accord and the coordinator general process, expressing disappointment that more opportunities for local government involvement were not formalised.
- And discusses the community engagement charter, criticising the lack of clarity and direction it provides for councils.
- He criticises the behaviour standards panel, calling for a review to address its cost and ineffectiveness.
- Then discusses the council rates oversight process, expressing dissatisfaction with its lack of practical utility and suggesting a need for improvement.

### **Financial Accountability and Cost Shifting**

- He emphasizes the need for a cost-shifting review to highlight the financial burden placed on local government by state regulations.
- Then discusses the importance of financial accountability at both state and local levels, suggesting that state government should also be held accountable for its obligations.
- And mentions various operational aspects that need review, such as boundaries, commission, jetties, wastewater, regional roads, housing planning, and infrastructure planning.
- He concludes by expressing a commitment to addressing these issues if given the opportunity to serve as the local government minister.

### **LGA- ALGA update Mayor Matt Burnett ALGA President**

Mayor Matt Burnett, ALGA President, discussed the financial sustainability of local government, highlighting the reinstatement of the inquiry led by Federal Minister Catherine King. He emphasized the need for increased funding, particularly the 1% share from the federal government, and the importance of untied funding for long-term financial planning. Burnett also addressed cost-shifting issues, the need for a \$1.1 billion annual fund for infrastructure, and the advocacy for regional councils. He noted the upcoming state election in March and ALGA's focus on federal advocacy. The discussion also touched on the need for equal funding distribution between cities and regions.

### **Action Items**

- Provide additional input to the federal government's inquiry into local government financial sustainability if desired.
- Continue advocating for increased and untied financial assistance grants from the federal government.
- Support ALGA's advocacy efforts, especially for regional and rural councils.
- Coordinate with ALGA on a unified national advocacy campaign focused on financial assistance.

### **Mayor Burnett's Role and Responsibilities**

- Mayor Burnett discusses his role as the President of ALGA and his responsibilities in representing 537 councils at national forums.
- He emphasizes the importance of engaging with political parties to ensure local government voices are heard in government.
- A video is introduced to showcase ALGA's activities over the past year, focusing on financial sustainability and funding issues.
- Mayor Burnett highlights the reinstatement of the inquiry into financial sustainability of local government and the need for updated submissions.

### **Financial Sustainability and Funding Issues**

- Mayor Burnett discusses the Federal Minister Catherine King's announcement of the inquiry into financial sustainability.
- He urges councils to update their submissions if necessary and emphasizes the need for more funding from the federal government.
- The conversation shifts to the importance of increasing the overall funding pie rather than fighting among councils for a larger share.
- Mayor Burnett stresses the need for untied funding to allow councils to plan long-term financial strategies.

### **Challenges and Success Stories in Local Government**

- Speaker 3 asks about the financial struggles faced by local councils across Australia.
- Mayor Burnett attributes the financial issues to cost-shifting and decreased funding for local councils.
- He calls for a new \$1.1 billion per year fund to support infrastructure development.
- Mayor Burnett invites questions from the audience, particularly from South Australia, to better understand their specific issues.

### **State Election Advocacy and Federal Election Focus**

- Speaker 4 asks about ALGA's role in state elections and advocacy efforts.
- Mayor Burnett explains that ALGA's main focus is on the federal election, leaving state-level advocacy to state associations.
- He emphasizes the importance of untied funding and formula-based funding for local councils.



- Mayor Burnett mentions the success of advocacy efforts, such as doubling the roads recovery fund, and the need for a unified national campaign for financial assistance.

### **Speed Limit Policy and Regional Equality**

- Speaker 5 inquires about ALGA's position on the federal government's proposal to reduce speed limits in regional areas.
- Mayor Burnett states that the decision should be left to individual councils in consultation with state and territory associations.
- He clarifies that the review is ongoing and may not result in widespread changes.
- Speaker 6 raises concerns about equality in service provision between cities and regions, highlighting the need for better support for regional councils.

### **Advocacy for Regional Councils**

- Mayor Burnett acknowledges the challenges faced by regional and rural councils and emphasizes ALGA's ongoing advocacy efforts.
- He mentions the Regional Forum held at the national General Assembly to support regional councils.
- Mayor Burnett highlights the success of advocacy for roads recovery, which benefited rural and regional councils.
- He reiterates the need to increase the overall funding pie rather than fighting for a larger share among councils.

### **LGA Panel - Why it's not just about the three Rs**

**Facilitated by Daniela Ritorto**

**Carol Mills**

**Director, Institute for Public Policy and  
Governance, Centre for Local Government  
A/Prof Selina Tually**

**Deputy Director, Centre for Social Impact  
A/Prof Mark Chou  
Associate Professor of Public Policy,  
The Australian National University**

The panel discussed the persistent criticism of local government's role, often reduced to roads, rates, and rubbish (the "three Rs"). A/Prof Mark Chou attributed this to historical ratepayer ideologies prioritising property owners. A/Prof Selina Tually highlighted the complexity of local government services, noting over 400 occupations and 300 services. Carol Mills emphasized the need for clearer roles and responsibilities among tiers of government. The discussion also covered the importance of local government in delivering well-being services, the need for better funding models, and the critical role of local councils in community trust and engagement.

### **Action Items**

- Develop a more sophisticated and unified messaging strategy to better communicate the diverse range of services provided by local councils.
- Explore opportunities to improve funding models and secure more untied grants from state and federal governments to support local councils.
- Continue advocating for clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities across the different tiers of government.
- Expand the use of community engagement mechanisms like citizen juries to better understand local priorities and rebuild trust in local government.

### **Notes**

#### **Criticism of Local Government and the Three Rs**

- Moderator introduces the topic of criticism in the media, noting that local government is often told to stick to roads, rates, and rubbish.
- Mark, explains that the persistence of the three Rs is due to historical ideologies like the ratepayer ideology, which prioritised property owners and businesses.
- Mark mentions that while services have expanded, the legacy of the ratepayer ideology continues to influence perceptions.
- Mark shares an example of media criticism and resistance from local government leaders, highlighting the polarising nature of the issue.

#### **Challenges in Perception and Service Delivery**

- Moderator discusses research showing that councils provide over 300 services, questioning why the perception of "back to basics" persists.
- Selina, argues that Australia is lazy in naming things and that the sector provides much more than just roads, rates, and rubbish.
- Selina emphasizes the need for a unified voice to express the diverse services councils provide and the need to modernise funding models.
- Selina, adds that there is a media piece in this issue and calls for better civics education to help people understand the roles of different tiers of government.

### **Understanding Roles and Responsibilities**

- Moderator asks if people know which tier of government delivers what, and Selina argues that understanding roles is crucial for efficient government.
- Selina suggests that local councils need to simplify the dialogue and explain their diverse roles better.
- Selina, notes that from a system level, it matters, but from the perspective of everyday people, coordination and seamlessness are more important.
- Mark agrees that local councils are doing a great job in advocacy and that the message needs to be shared more with communities.

### **Cost Shifting and Funding Challenges**

- Moderator mentions Sam Telfer's comments on cost shifting and asks Carol about the relationship between tiers of government.
- Carol explains that over recent decades, services have shifted from state to local government, but the costs have not transferred at the same rate.
- Carol highlights the need for clarity of ownership and responsibility to allow local government to do what it does well.
- Carol shares an example of a coalition from South Korea facing similar issues, emphasizing the need for secure funding sources.

### **Community Support and Advocacy**

- Moderator provides statistics on the services councils manage and the disconnect between income and responsibilities.
- Carol discusses the importance of untied grants and local decision-making authority for councils.
- Mark emphasizes the challenge of messaging within the sector and the need to shift the conversation from ratepayer contributions to federal funding.
- Selina talks about the need for councils to advocate for their communities and the importance of a unified voice.

### **Councils' Role in Wellbeing Services**

- Moderator asks Selina about councils' ability to deliver wellbeing services like housing and homelessness.
- Selina notes that the burden on regional councils is heavy and that the resourcing and community priorities vary.
- Selina mentions ongoing work with metropolitan councils in South Australia on community wellbeing and the impact of the cost of living crisis.
- Selina highlights the need for more councils to do work in the wellbeing space and the importance of funding structures.

### **Ending Homelessness Toolkit**

- Moderator asks Selina about the Ending Homelessness Toolkit for Local Government.
- Selina explains that the toolkit was developed with the support of the Local Government Association of South Australia and is being taken up nationally.
- The toolkit provides fact sheets to guide councils at varying stages in supporting efforts to end homelessness.
- Selina emphasizes the importance of local government's advocacy role and the need for practical resources to help councils take action.

### **Community Support for Council Roles**

- Moderator mentions research showing community support for local government having a say on social and community issues.
- Mark explains that while 70% of Australians want councils to stick to basic services, over 90% support councils advocating for their communities.
- Mark notes that while Australians expect councils to do more, only 60% think councils should be given more power and funding.
- Mark highlights the need for councils to continue providing a wide range of services despite the perception that they should stick to the three Rs.

### **Designing the Federation**

- Moderator asks Carol about her vision for designing the Federation if starting from scratch.
- Carol suggests that two layers of government might be more appropriate for Australia's size and population, with a national layer and regional governments.
- Carol emphasizes the need for progressive change within the existing federal system and the importance of political will.
- Carol notes that the current model can impede progress but that cooperation and strategic approaches are crucial.

### **Trust in Local Government**

- Moderator asks if people would accept higher rates for fewer services if councils stuck to the three Rs.
- Mark explains that research shows no one wants rates to go up, and Australians expect councils to provide a wide range of services.
- Mark highlights the importance of building local government as a source of local democracy and shifting the debate away from the three Rs.
- Carol and Selina agree that local councils are still trusted more than other levels of government and that trust is crucial for maintaining community engagement and support.

## **LGA - Excellence in Public Health Awards**

The 10th Anniversary of the Excellence in Public Health Awards in South Australia celebrated outstanding contributions by local councils.

The awards recognised initiatives like the City of Salisbury's Salisbury Social Rights Initiative, which increased physical activity and reduced social isolation through cycling, and the District Council of Grant's Art Ability, Disability, Inclusion project, which promoted disability awareness.

The City of Onkaparinga received a highly commended certificate for improved communication in their school immunisation program.

The event highlighted the collaborative efforts of SA Health and local governments in areas such as food safety, wastewater systems, and immunisation, emphasizing the importance of public health in community well-being.

## **LGA - Sponsor address**

**Joanne Denley**

**Director, LGA Mutual**

**Joanne Denley, Director of LGA Mutual,**

Spoke on behalf of the organization at the LGA Annual General Meeting and Conference. She highlighted the 40th anniversary of the Workers Compensation Scheme, which has reduced claims by 80% since 1986, saving members \$338 million. LGA Mutual maintains 100% Council membership and invests a third of its annual budget into risk management programs, distributing \$8 million in risk incentive funding. Upcoming initiatives include the LG Safe WHS resources, a psychosocial support program, and a Regional Council collaboration project. Nominations are open for the 2026 LGA Mutual Awards, offering \$90,000 in funding for WHS and risk management initiatives.

## **LGA -Local Government**

### **Finance Authority AGM**

The Local Government Finance Authority (LGFA) of South Australia held its annual general meeting, where Michael Says, the chair, reported a record profit of \$186.6 million for the 2024-2025 financial year, with \$60.2 million in bonuses and special distributions, and \$42.5 million in tax-equivalent payments.

The LGFA's loan portfolio increased to \$964 million, and a \$3 million special distribution was approved. The Reserve Bank of Australia reduced the official cash rate twice.

The board thanked outgoing members and welcomed new trustees. The annual report and financial statements were adopted, and trustee allowances were increased by 6.5%..

## **LGA - LGA South Australia AGM**

The LGA South Australia AGM covered significant achievements and future plans. The LGA advocated for algal bloom and drought funding, resulting in a new grant fund and drought relief options.

They made 18 policy submissions on various issues and launched a 2026 state election platform focusing on transport, environment, disaster resilience, and financial sustainability.

The LGA saved councils \$17 million in 2024-25 through mutual liability schemes and procurement. They also emphasized sustainable procurement and equitable funding for CWS networks.

The meeting concluded with a vote on various motions and a reminder of the next AGM in 2026.

## **Action Items**

- Promote the LGA's 2026 state election platform across media and other channels.
- Receive the preliminary findings of the council member behaviour review in December and the final findings in early 2026.
- Establish the LGA early intervention panel to provide external expertise to councils on managing behavioural issues.
- Continue advocacy for permanent and indexed supplementary road funding and restoration of federal assistance grants.
- Collaborate with the Electoral Commission on the campaign to promote the 2026 council elections.