



## Speech by NGAA Chair Cr Matt Deeth

### Members lunch at ALGA Thursday 15 June 2023, Swan Room National Convention Centre

I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet today, and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.

Welcome all.

Acknowledge fellow members of the NGAA Strategic Advisory Committee

- Cr Brett Treby, Deputy Chair, from the City of Wanneroo in WA
- Mayor Glenn Docherty, Immediate Past NGAA Chair from the City of Playford in South Australia
- Mayor Terresa Lynes of the City of Gosnells in WA
- Cr Joseph Haweil, Mayor of the City of Hume in Victoria
- And
- Mayor David Leach of Mount Barker District Council in South Australia and recent host of our National Congress in beautiful Hahndorf.

Very pleased to welcome Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Councillors and Administrators of our Member Councils as well as guests who are here to connect with us and learn more about our Alliance.

The theme of today's meeting is achievement – and a commitment to use our advocacy wins as a launching pad for greater impact and influence on the Federal Government policies that will impact our municipalities now and for generations to come.

I have on the screen just some of the most significant policy and program outcomes of the Albanese's 23-24 Budget, handed down in May.

NGAA members will be familiar with this list – because it is the shopping list that we took to Minister King. It is the list of policy recommendations we took to Labor while they were in opposition – to Prime Minister Albanese when he participated in our National Congresses as Shadow Infrastructure Minister.

- An additional \$250 million in local roads and community infrastructure funding that was earmarked for particular geographic areas and for the first time ever – outer urban councils were listed as a specific target area
- \$200 million for the Thriving Suburbs Program for community infrastructure in suburban communities. We all know that outer urban growth areas suffer significant deficits in the community facilities which other urban areas enjoy, with sports and recreation facilities, community centres and green open space either missing completely or delivered decades after residents have moved in. This program is what we have been looking for and our goal is that it is just the start of ongoing funding commitments.

- \$150 million or the Urban Precincts and Partnerships Program. Investment in place-based priorities through partnerships with state and local governments and communities is key to building productive and healthy neighbourhoods. Some of our Sydney members have experienced the City Deal model and have experienced the incredible benefit of three tiers of government working together. Although details are yet to be published, we expect that this program will deliver a refreshed model of intergovernmental cooperation, albeit on a smaller scale than the Western Sydney City Deal.
- The reinstatement of the Cities and Suburbs unit in the Department of Infrastructure to make sure this work happens.
- And a welcome response to our calls for leadership and vision from the Federal government – the establishment of the Urban Policy Forum and even more importantly the appointment of our own CEO to be one of only two local government representatives on the 12 person Forum.

This is proof that evidence-based advocacy works. That when we collaborate, when we share a vision and a goal and are persistent and pragmatic – we can achieve these major outcomes for growth areas.

So now – we launch.

The Urban Policy Forum and National Policy Framework that will be delivered is the launching pad we need to take forward our shared objectives.

While Bron tells me the Urban Policy Forum meetings are confidential, I am certain she will be flying our flag and representing our interests along the following lines.

You have told that us that growth areas need to be:

**STRATEGICALLY PLANNED.** I'm not talking about local government strategic planning, I'm talking about three levels of government thinking, planning and working together **STRATEGICALLY.**

That means population projections are harmonised across levels of government so we are all planning from the same basis. It means infrastructure is planned and delivered in the right sequence, at the right time and in the right place. It means our land is used for the best possible purposes – which is not always residential.

You have also told us that growth areas need to be **SUSTAINABLE.**

Protective of environmental assets, and with future focussed urban design and architecture that will be suitable for our changing climate. With industry and economic activity that sustains a local workforce, with opportunities for work and study close enough that our residents can cut down their commutes as well as their carbon emissions.

And you have told us that growth areas need to be **SOCIALLY CONNECTED.**

With ongoing commitments to fill that funding gap for community infrastructure that is so desperately needed in new communities. And with resilient communities as an objective – not just a necessity when a bushfire, flood or pandemic strikes.

Tomorrow at the Australian Council for Local Governments I will be speaking on a panel about Urban Policy, alongside Minister Catherine King.

This is our chance to claim our space, to showcase the opportunity, vibrancy and potential of our communities. And to make clear what our Councils are experiencing.

At an appropriate moment during the panel session, I would like to call on growth area Mayors to stand up and be counted – to show those in the room that we may only make up 6% of LGAs, but we represent 20% of the population. That together we have welcomed 34% of Australia’s recent population growth, but only received 14% of infrastructure investment.

And I would like to maintain that sense of unity and shared purpose over the next year or two, as they are likely to be pivotal in the evolution of national policies that will shape our communities for decades – beyond the investment in Commonwealth or Olympic games, beyond our terms on Council. We must work harder than ever to make the most of this opportunity.

Thank you all for coming to lunch today – I’ll see many of you at the meeting tomorrow, and I am very much looking forward to working with all of you in this exciting period for NGAA.