

6.5 Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly, June 2026**Report Author:** Jack Hanna, Executive Officer Councillor Liaison**Report Presenter:** Jack Hanna, Executive Officer Councillor Liaison**Executive Leader:** Kirsty Pearce, Chief of Staff Office of the CEO**Executive Summary**

1. The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) will be held in Canberra between 23 and 25 June 2026.
2. The NGA provides an annual forum for local government to discuss and advance issues of national significance to local government. Member councils have the opportunity of submitting motions for consideration and debate in a forum involving local government representatives from across Australia.
3. This report proposes participation in the 2026 NGA and lodgement of four motions on behalf of the City of Melbourne (CoM).

Recommendation from management

4. That Council resolves to:
 - 4.1. Approve submission of the motions included in Attachment 1 of the report from management for consideration at the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly.
 - 4.2. Nominate Councillors to represent the City of Melbourne at the National General Assembly to be held in Canberra between 23 and 25 June 2026 at an estimated cost of \$3600 per participant.
 - 4.3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make minor editorial changes to Attachment 1 of the report from management prior to submission to the Australian Local Government Association.

Purpose

5. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval on CoM participation at the ALGA NGA which will be held in Canberra between 23 and 25 June 2026.

Background

6. The ALGA holds an annual NGA in Canberra as a national forum for local government across Australia. The Assembly brings together councillors from across the country and can include addresses from party leaders, ministers and shadow ministers, keynote speakers on a range of topics, discussions on policy issues and debate on motions from councils. Motions from councils guide the ALGA board in its advocacy work to the Australian Government.
7. In previous years, representation has occurred through participation by a number of Councillors to support motions lodged by CoM and in debate on other matters.

Key considerations

8. The theme for the 2026 NGA is 'Stronger Together: Resilient, Productive, United'. The theme recognises that as the level of government closest to communities, councils strengthen their communities by working together to boost productivity and deliver united, collaborative leadership. A Discussion Paper supporting the theme can be found on the ALGA's website: alga.com.au
9. Following discussion by Councillors, it is proposed that four motions on the following topics be submitted. The motions, national objectives and key arguments are outlined in Attachment 1.
 - 9.1. Current and future productivity of Australian Capital Cities.
 - 9.2. Responsible utilisation of AI infrastructure, including data centres.
 - 9.3. Support for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and
 - 9.4. Commitment to National Anti-Racism Framework
10. The topic referenced in section 9.1 was the subject of a motion submitted by CoM in 2025. The matter was debated at the NGA but due to time constraints was unable to be put to a vote. Subsequently, CoM was invited to consider resubmitting the motion.
11. The cost per participant is estimated at \$3600 and includes airfare, accommodation, registration fees and incidentals.

Legal

12. There are no direct legal implications as a result of the recommendation from management.

Finance

13. The cost associated with representation in Canberra is estimated at \$3600 per participant. This includes airfare (\$1000), accommodation (\$900), registration fees for conference and associated activities (\$1200) and incidental costs (\$500).

Conflict of interest

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

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

15. The recommendation contained in this report is compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* as it does not raise any human rights issues.
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Health and Safety

16. Councillors travelling to Canberra will undertake personal safety and awareness precautionary steps which apply to interstate travel.

Consultation

17. In developing this proposal, no consultation was required. Some of the proposed motions have been the subject of discussion with other capital cities.

Relevance to Council Plan and Council Policies

18. Participation in the NGA will allow representatives to advocate a CoM position on matters included in the program and through ancillary discussions with government representatives.

Social and environmental impacts

19. No social impacts were identified in developing this proposal. Some of the motions proposed for the NGA address social and community issues and highlight environmental risks.
20. The carbon emissions resulting from air travel to Canberra will be offset with the purchase of credits.

Gender Impact Assessment

21. No Gender Impact Assessment was required.

Attachment List

1. Proposed CoM motions for 2026 ALGA NGA [6.5.1 - 4 pages]

Proposed City of Melbourne motions – ALGA National General Assembly, June 2026

Topic	Current and future productivity of Australian Capital Cities
Motion	That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government’s Productivity Commission to investigate the current and future productivity of Australia’s Capital Cities and their competitiveness compared to global peers. Specifically, this should include the efficiency and appropriateness of current finance and governance arrangements as it relates to infrastructure and service delivery.
National Objective	<p>This is a national issue because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Capital Cities are facing increased economic, social, and cultural competition internationally as other global cities seek to improve their relevance as global centres. • Nearly 90 per cent of Australia’s GDP is produced in the Capital Cities. Australia’s economic success depends on successful cities. • Funding allocated to Australia’s Capital Cities is often constrained by the discretionary decision making in State and Territory budgets, limiting their ability to deliver essential infrastructure and services which may be more appropriately managed at the Capital City scale.
Key Arguments	<p>The motion seeks the Productivity Commission – Australia’s principal review and advisory body – to investigate the productivity of Australia’s Capital Cities in their current governance arrangements.</p> <p>Productivity Commission may seek to understand the benefits of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger urban and regional planning • Increased economic competitiveness • Better service delivery • Stronger governance and strategic leadership • More equitable resource distribution • Different models for city governance including Metropolitan Authorities that coordinate infrastructure and services at the Capital City level • Improved efficiency and cost savings <p>Examples may include the failure to coordinate and align transport, planning, population growth and economic policy to address challenges such as high housing costs and long commute times that reduce productivity and redistribute income and wealth away from the productive sectors of the economy.</p> <p>Australia’s eight Capital cities – Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth – are home to more than 75 per cent of Australia’s population and produce nearly 90 per cent of Australia’s economic output.</p>

Proposed City of Melbourne motions – ALGA National General Assembly, June 2026

Topic	Responsible utilisation of AI infrastructure, including data centres
Motion	That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to establish a nationally consistent policy and regulatory framework for data centres that ensures best-practice siting and design; mandatory renewable energy use, fit for purpose water use and efficiency requirements; measurable community benefits and transparent reporting of resource use enabled by national uniform water, energy and emissions rating tools fast-tracked for development and implementation. Strengthened national coordination is essential to deliver consistent, high-standard sustainability regulation across all states and territories throughout the data-centre lifecycle, guide transparent industry reporting, protect community amenity, support emissions reduction and water security whilst growing Australia’s digital economy.
National Objective	The rapid expansion of AI infrastructure and data centres is critical to Australia’s innovation economy, research capability, data sovereignty and productivity, whilst increasing pressure on electricity networks, water resources, land use and community amenity. A coordinated national approach is required to provide industry certainty, upgraded infrastructure and ensure positive environmental, climate and community outcomes. Local governments lack regulatory tools to manage cumulative impacts or secure community benefit, particularly as approvals are increasingly removed from local decision-making. Ensuring councils retain a meaningful voice is essential to safeguarding environmental standards and community interests, while federal leadership ensures data centres contribute sustainably to national growth.
Key Arguments	<p>Data centres and AI infrastructure are expanding rapidly across Australia, increasing demand for electricity, water and land while placing growing pressure on local communities and environments. Councils are increasingly required to manage cumulative planning, environmental and amenity impacts, often with minimal involvement in approval processes. A nationally led framework would set clear expectations for renewable energy uptake, water efficiency (including recycled water), emissions reduction and best-practice design across the facility lifecycle. Transparent reporting of energy, water use and emissions would strengthen public accountability and support progress toward climate targets.</p> <p>National coordination with energy and water authorities would help manage long-term grid reliability, water scarcity and system risks. Critically, a consistent federal approach would ensure data-centre investment delivers tangible community benefits through improved local infrastructure, reduced environmental impacts, enhanced resilience and clearer pathways for councils to advocate for their communities. Federal leadership is essential to enable responsible growth while supporting community wellbeing and Australia’s broader climate and digital-economy objectives.</p>

Proposed City of Melbourne motions – ALGA National General Assembly, June 2026

Topic	Support for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
Motion	That the National General Assembly reaffirm its resolution of 2021 and call on the Australian Government to sign and ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons during the current term of government, consistent with Australia’s commitment to global disarmament and international cooperation.
National Objective	This is a national issue because it seeks to strengthen Australia’s national resilience, public safety and international standing by encouraging the Australian Government to sign and ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty provides a clear, internationally recognised framework for eliminating nuclear weapons and preventing catastrophic humanitarian and environmental harm. Ratification would align Australia with the majority of its regional neighbours, reflect long-standing community and local government support, and reinforce a rules-based international order consistent with Australia’s commitment to peace, security and effective multilateral cooperation.
Key Arguments	<p>In 2021, the ALGA National General Assembly unanimously adopted a motion calling on the Australian Government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Following that resolution, ALGA wrote to the then Minister for Foreign Affairs conveying local governments’ position.</p> <p>Since that time, there has been a change of federal government, and ALGA has not reiterated its call. The Australian Labor Party’s stated policy position is to sign and ratify the TPNW when in government.</p> <p>The 2026 NGA theme, “Stronger Together: Resilient, productive, united,” highlights the role of councils in national resilience, emergency management and intergovernmental cooperation. In the event of a nuclear detonation, local governments would be required to respond to severe and long-lasting impacts on communities and infrastructure, including debris management, waste disposal, emergency shelter, public health measures, loss of essential services, and workforce wellbeing—often in coordination with state and federal authorities.</p> <p>Such impacts would far exceed the capacity of local government to prevent or meaningfully mitigate once they occur, underscoring the importance of national and international efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons entirely. To date, 51 Australian local governments across all states and territories have endorsed the ICAN Cities Appeal, reflecting broad and sustained local government support for the objectives of the TPNW.</p> <p>This motion is consistent with ALGA’s previous position, does not duplicate any NGA resolution from the past two years, and provides an opportunity for the local government sector to reaffirm its collective voice on an issue of local, national and global significance.</p>

Proposed City of Melbourne motions – ALGA National General Assembly, June 2026

Topic	Commitment to National Anti-Racism Framework
Motion	That the National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to fully fund and implement the Australian Human Rights Commission’s 10-year National Anti-Racism Framework, including all 63 recommendations, and calls on ALGA to work with the Commission to identify and promote priority actions for local government to support councils in addressing and eliminating racism in their communities.
National Objective	This is a national issue because combating racism is a national priority at present, requiring urgent, coordinated action across all levels of government. Fully funding and implementing the Australian Human Rights Commission’s 10-year National Anti-Racism Framework provides an evidence-based roadmap to address racism in institutions, services and communities. This objective seeks to enable ALGA to work with the Commission to identify urgent, effective and co-ordinated actions for local government—anti-racism planning, community education, inclusive service delivery, robust data collection and accountability—so councils are equipped to help eliminate racism nationwide.
Key Arguments	<p>Racism and hate undermine public health, equality, public trust and community safety, and their impacts are experienced locally in workplaces, schools, public spaces and service systems. Recent increases in reported incidents of racism and hatred-motivated behaviour across Australia highlight that addressing racism is a pressing national challenge requiring coordinated action across all levels of government.</p> <p>The Australian Human Rights Commission’s 10-year National Anti-Racism Framework provides the first comprehensive, evidence-based national approach to preventing and responding to racism. Its 63 recommendations outline practical, measurable actions to address systemic racism, improve accountability, strengthen education and awareness, and support affected communities. Full funding and implementation of the Framework is essential to ensure its long-term effectiveness and to avoid fragmented or inconsistent responses.</p> <p>Local governments play a critical role in fostering inclusive communities, delivering frontline services, shaping public spaces and engaging diverse populations. Councils are often the first point of contact for community concerns related to discrimination and safety. However, councils require clear guidance, resources and national coordination to effectively fulfil this role.</p> <p>By working in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission, ALGA can help identify and promote priority Framework recommendations most relevant to local government, including anti-racism planning, community education, inclusive service delivery, improved data collection and accountability measures. This will support councils to take consistent, informed and effective action, contributing to stronger, safer and more inclusive communities nationwide.</p> <p>A copy of the Australian Human Rights Commission’s Framework can be found at https://humanrights.gov.au/resource-hub/by-resource-type/reports/race/anti-racism-framework. The Framework was developed following an extensive community consultation process over a five-year period.</p>