



The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman MP
Minister for Local Government

17 March 2023

Clr Darriea Turley AM
President
Local Government NSW
GPO Box 7003
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Clr Turley

I am writing on behalf of the NSW Liberals and Nationals to acknowledge your correspondence of 21 December 2022 and to thank you for taking the time to make a contribution ahead of the NSW election.

We are sincerely grateful for your constructive engagement, because one of the core beliefs of the Perrottet-Toole Government is that embracing new ideas, not politics-as-usual, is the key to navigating the challenges ahead and securing our state's long-term success.

That's why we believe genuine engagement is vital. The best ideas almost always come from the NSW community, and our state moves forward when it is led by a government with the experience and integrity to put those ideas into action.

The Liberals and Nationals have a long-term plan to get through the current uncertainties and make the most of the opportunities ahead, and that includes supporting local government to deliver better infrastructure, services and outcomes for communities across NSW.

I am pleased to provide you with the enclosed response. A re-elected NSW Liberal and Nationals Government hopes to have the opportunity to engage further with you as we put our plan into action in the next term of government.

Thank you for your contribution and for your commitment to local government in NSW and helping the Liberal and Nationals Government build a positive future for NSW.

Yours sincerely

The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman MP
Minister for Local Government

Encl: Collated Responses to 2023 LGNSW Election Priorities (various portfolios)

LGNSW PRIORITY	NSW LIBERAL AND NATIONALS GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
<p>Amend the rate peg methodology to prevent future financial shocks to the sector and to ultimately remove rate pegging</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has asked IPART to undertake a review of the rate peg methodology, including the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI). This followed the base rate peg being set at a very low 0.7 per cent for councils in 2022-23.</p> <p>A key aim of the review is to bring stability to the system. We need to strike a fair balance that ensures the rate peg is reflective of changes in inflation and costs, giving councils the resources they need to deliver vital services and infrastructure for their communities, while protecting ratepayers from unnecessary rate increases.</p> <p>IPART has sought and received an extension of time to provide its final report by 31 August. The extra time will enable IPART to hold additional workshops with metropolitan, regional and rural council representatives to discuss options to improve the rate peg.</p> <p>The additional period of time will also enable IPART to hold ratepayer and community consultation to discuss these options to ensure the important issues raised in submissions have been addressed.</p>
<p>Continue to rebate increases in council Emergency Services Levy (ESL) contributions and eventually replace the levy with a broad-based property tax</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will continue to work with councils and LGNSW on providing financial support to councils to meet their ESL contributions.</p>

<p>Hold a public inquiry into cost shifting in NSW to address the financial sustainability of local government, with a view to ending cost shifting</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government remains committed to working with local government and supporting their financial sustainability.</p>
<p>Legislate to make clear that Rural Fire Service mobile assets are vested in the Rural Fire Service</p>	<p>Under the NSW Rural Fire Services Act, Rural Fire Service (RFS) assets are vested with councils. As such, the Government's position is that RFS assets are not the property of the Government and that local councils have financial control of the assets. This position has been in place since 1997.</p> <p>The NSW Auditor-General has concurred with this position and has directed councils to comply with this requirement. Councils are therefore required to record and report on these assets in order to comply with accounting standards. This position has been communicated to council general managers.</p>
<p>Commit to fairness, transparency, integrity and certainty of grant funding to councils</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to grants programs that are transparent and in the public interest.</p>
<p>Increase financial support and funding for restoration, remediation and betterment of local community infrastructure, including water and sewerage assets, in advance of disasters where the risks are identified and in the recovery stage</p>	<p>The 2022-23 Budget included a \$3.5 billion joint commitment between the NSW and Australian governments in response to the February and March 2022 floods. The Half-Yearly Review builds on this commitment with a further \$2.6 billion in joint funding.</p> <p>Key commitments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant and Funding Support – \$1.1 billion in clean up assistance and direct funding support for affected households, primary producers, local councils, small businesses and not for profit organisations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient Homes Fund – \$800 million to improve the resilience of homes in high-risk flood areas, targeted at the Ballina, Byron, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley, and Tweed local government areas • Regional and Local Roads Repair Program – \$500 million to support councils to undertake urgent repairs for roads impacted by major flooding events throughout New South Wales • Implementation of the 2022 NSW Independent Flood Inquiry – \$199 million to implement inquiry recommendations, including enhancing NSW’s flood rescue capability, strengthening key disaster welfare functions, and better supporting volunteerism • NSW Reconstruction Authority – Establishing a dedicated agency to support communities to build greater resilience, and rebuild and recover quicker from natural disaster events.
<p>Permanently embed State and federal government funded Community Recovery Officers into councils across NSW in recognition of the increasing frequency, scale and long recovery timeframes of natural disasters</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Commit to proactive strategies to respond to natural disasters and adapt to climate risks</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The NSW Reconstruction Authority, established by the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government, brings new functions that focus on planning for and building a more disaster-proof state. This includes developing and implementing a State Disaster Mitigation Plan, and a range of new planning powers that will help ensure our built environment is more disaster resilient.</p>

Boost road funding significantly to respond to unprecedented damage (washaways, potholes) as a result of severe flooding and ongoing La Niña rains

Since 2019, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has supported local government with the following programs:

- Fixing Local Roads program – \$691 million to over 550 projects
- Fixing Country Rail program – \$42 million to over 30 projects
- Fixing Country Bridges program – \$500 million to over 500 projects
- Fixing Local Roads Pothole Repair Round – \$50 million to 94 regional councils
- Regional and Local Roads Repair Round – \$500 million
- Stage 1 Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package (Northern NSW Betterment Fund) – first of its kind funding with the Commonwealth Government – \$312.5 million to build back better.

A re-elected NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will continue its ongoing support for local government.

The Liberals and Nationals are committing \$1 billion to repair, upgrade and fast-track roads and freight across regional NSW.

This includes another \$400 million for the Fixing Local Roads program, as well as \$600 million for a new Fast Tracking Freight program and a Build Back Better program.

- Build Back Better
 - A re-elected NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will commit \$300 million to help councils invest in stronger, more resilient roads and transport infrastructure

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This follows our \$312.5 million pilot Betterment program for Northern NSW, co-funded with the Commonwealth○ This program will allow councils to rebuild and upgrade infrastructure to be more resilient to natural disasters, rather than on a like-for-like basis○ International studies have shown that for every \$1 spent on mitigation, \$10 is spent in recovery. ● Fast-Tracking Freight<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A re-elected NSW Liberal and Nationals Government will commit \$300 million to invest in new projects that tackle freight pinch points on our road and rail network. This will better connect road and rail with key freight hubs, whilst also increasing the capacity, efficiency and reliability of the network○ This program will no longer be funded from Restart NSW, allowing us to design the project in a way that better supports regional NSW and acknowledges the long term benefits of improved freight infrastructure. ● Fixing Local Roads<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A re-elected Liberal and Nationals Government will commit another \$400 million to the Fixing Local Roads program○ This program has benefited every regional council in the state, with 577 projects funded to repair, maintain and seal roads
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Fixing Local Roads program provides vital support to councils, allowing them to repair and upgrade sections of their road network that they may not otherwise be able to fund.
<p>Pledge that local government will not be worse off under any future infrastructure contributions reforms</p>	<p>The NSW Liberals and Nationals will introduce an amended package to the Parliament in 2023, to implement the state infrastructure contributions framework, creating a consistent and reliable revenue stream for state infrastructure that supports housing and productivity.</p> <p>This revenue will help fund state and regional roads, public transport infrastructure, pedestrian and cycling paths, health facilities, emergency services, schools, and open space, in the regions where the revenue is collected, unlocking new housing supply.</p>
<p>Protect local government ownership and management of council water utilities and invest in them to bolster water security</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has a proven track record on supporting local councils to address key risk to regional water safety and security in NSW. Over \$1 billion has been committed to the Safe and Secure Water Program to support local councils in delivering projects that improve water security and water quality, and help ensure wastewater services are meeting environmental and public health standards.</p> <p>To date, funding has been committed to over 240 projects across regional NSW with a further \$90 million contributed to the program in the 2022-23 NSW Budget.</p> <p>In addition, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has implemented the Town Water Risk Reduction Program to</p>

	<p>encourage greater collaboration between water utilities and develop and improve the operating skills and capabilities for water operators across NSW. This program has been widely supported by Local Councils as an important step in addressing skill shortages and minimising risks to town water security.</p>
<p>Build 5,000 additional units of social housing each year for the next 10 years to contribute to addressing the homelessness and housing affordability crisis right across NSW</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government announced \$2.8 billion Housing Package as part of the 2022-23 NSW Budget. The package includes an investment of \$300 million in social housing in NSW, and \$174 million for key worker housing.</p> <p>The NSW Liberals and Nationals are committed to continuing to work with local governments to deliver additional social housing and welcomes opportunities for additional dwellings to be constructed.</p>
<p>Minimum targets of 5-10% social and affordable housing across NSW and 25 per cent for government-owned land</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government's Housing 2041 Strategy is enabling the delivery of creative and targeted solutions to housing to support security, comfort, independence, and choice in alignment with the key housing pillars of supply, diversity, affordability, and resilience. It is a whole-of-government approach to addressing the issues of housing supply and affordability pressures in both metropolitan and regional NSW.</p> <p>In addition, under the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government, Landcom will be mandated to raise the target of affordable housing, including rental and freehold sale, to at least 20% across Landcom's portfolio of regional projects by 2025, with a goal of 30% in regional NSW beyond that date, subject to market conditions.</p>

	<p>For all new Landcom projects in Metropolitan Sydney, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government are ensuring a minimum of 10% of new housing is contributing to improving the affordability of housing in NSW.</p> <p>Landcom's affordability targets include a minimum of 5% Affordable Rental Housing. The remaining portion (15% in regional areas or 5% in Metropolitan areas) may be a mix of Affordable Rental Housing and any other affordable housing products which improve housing affordability more generally (for example, affordable market housing or fractional ownership).</p> <p>Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE) has unveiled a landmark Affordable Housing Pilot Project in partnership with the Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport, Rob Stokes. the project will unlock hundreds of affordable homes to help tackle the issue of housing affordability. TAHE have proposed a 25% increase to the infill affordable housing floor space bonus available, to make it easier to plan for and deliver affordable housing.</p> <p>In addition, TAHE is creating a new State Significant Development (SSD) pathway for affordable housing to be delivered by TAHE, as part of its Affordable Housing Pilot Program, which will allocate surplus land for more than 300 new affordable homes in the Bayside, Blacktown, Inner West, and Cumberland Council areas;</p> <p>TAHE is also creating a new SSD pathway for residential developments worth more than \$100 million, that include a minimum 20% of GFA as either social or affordable housing.</p>
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<p>Establish a ministry solely dedicated to addressing homelessness and the housing crisis</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has a Minister for Homes, and a Minister for Families and Communities who are dedicated to addressing homelessness and housing needs.</p>
<p>Introduce policies and programs to achieve the 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 50% and the 2050 net zero emissions target</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is taking decisive and responsible action to reduce emissions and secure the State's economic prosperity for the decades to come.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has targets to reduce our emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 and by 70 per cent by 2035 (compared to 2005 levels), and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. These targets will be met by creating new jobs, reducing household costs and attracting investment to NSW.</p> <p>In 2020, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government launched the first stage of its Net Zero Plan, which is the foundation for action on climate change in NSW. Since the Plan's release, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has launched Australia's most ambitious renewable energy, electric vehicle and industry decarbonisation policies.</p> <p>With current policies in place and future initiatives supported by the NSW Climate Change Fund (CCF), the State's annual emissions are projected to reduce by 60.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂-e) by 2030, and by 83.5 Mt CO₂-e by 2035.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is investing over \$2.5 billion from the CCF. This investment includes supporting the implementation of the Net Zero Plan and the NSW</p>

	<p>Electricity Roadmap, which will help NSW reach the goal of net zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>The Net Zero Plan and related policies are expected to attract more than \$39 billion in private investment to NSW and support more than 13,000 jobs by 2035, mostly in regional NSW. The Plan and implementation update are available online at www.energy.nsw.gov.au/nsw-plans-and-progress.</p> <p>The Net Zero Plan Implementation Update 2022 provides a comprehensive and detailed overview of the policies and programs in place to reach the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government's interim emission reduction targets. It provides emissions reduction projections under current policy and future initiatives supported by the extension of the CCF to 2050.</p> <p>The Implementation Update also lists opportunities for further emissions reductions not addressed within the 2022 projections.</p> <p>The Update is available online at www.energy.nsw.gov.au/nsw-plans-and-progress/government-strategies-and-frameworks/reaching-net-zero-emissions/net-zero-plan/net-zero-plan-stage1.</p>
<p>Reinvest 100% of the waste levy to fund the delivery of priority infrastructure and programs as outlined in the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy</p>	<p>The waste levy is an important market-based instrument that aims to reduce the amount of waste being landfilled and promote recycling and resource recovery.</p> <p>Over the last nine years, the waste levy has helped to fund the \$800 million Waste Less, Recycle More program, the largest waste program of its kind in Australia.</p>

	<p>The levy continues to fund implementation of the NSW Government’s Waste and Sustainable Materials (WASM) Strategy 2041, with \$356 million to be invested over five years, including to fund council programs, recycling and processing infrastructure.</p> <p>The waste levy also contributes to the \$2.3 billion spent on environmental programs in the 2022/23 budget, which includes funding to local government.</p> <p>The Waste Levy Review will commence in 2023 and LGNSW is encouraged to participate in the review.</p>
<p>Amend the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme to address barriers to regional development, deliver offsets in the areas experiencing impacts, and improve the quality assurance of accredited assessors</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to ensuring the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme delivers its objectives of no net loss of biodiversity, is underpinned by rigorous science and balances the needs of infrastructure delivery and environmental outcomes. Like any new market, the Scheme will be subject to continual improvement over time.</p> <p>Reforms have been underway under the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government since mid-2021. Reform progress is reported publicly and can be viewed by visiting www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/about-the-biodiversity-offsets-scheme/improvements-to-the-biodiversity-offsets-scheme.</p> <p>Recent improvements and reforms include the establishment of a \$106 million Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund in June 2022 to fast track the supply of biodiversity credits, with recent credit</p>

	<p>supply Expressions of Interest round being oversubscribed – indicating the Fund is working to bring more supply online.</p> <p>A dedicated Credit Supply Taskforce has also been established to manage the Fund, and fast-track supply of in-demand biodiversity credits, including by providing biodiversity assessments by accredited assessors at no up-front cost to landholders.</p> <p>A new compliance and assurance plan for Accredited Assessors has also been established, including an audit program, de-accreditation process and conflict of interest protocol to ensure greater accountability of Assessors.</p> <p>In addition to the existing reform program, overseen by Mike Mrdak AO, the recommendations of the Audit Office Review into the Effectiveness of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and Parliamentary Inquiry into the Integrity of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme are also now being incorporated into the reform program.</p> <p>The Scheme will be reviewed as part of the statutory review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, which is currently underway. Public consultation has begun and the community is encouraged to participate in the review by visiting www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity/overview-of-biodiversity-reform/statutory-review-of-the-biodiversity-conservation-act-2016.</p>
<p>Sign an intergovernmental agreement between the Premier and the LGNSW President, setting out key principles for an equal partnership between the two spheres of government to</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government remains committed to working in partnership with LGNSW and the local</p>

<p>improve outcomes for communities across NSW</p>	<p>government sector to improve outcomes for communities across the state.</p> <p>On 14 October 2019, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government signed a new Intergovernmental Agreement with LGNSW, on behalf of the local government sector. The new agreement, among other features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirms the Government’s commitment to providing funding to assist local councils to deliver infrastructure and services to their communities • Supports delivery of the Premier’s priorities • Ensures any potential impacts upon local government of State Government decisions are identified and appropriately considered • Reiterates the Government’s policy of no more forced council mergers.
<p>Introduce a local government Closing the Gap grant program to ensure councils can contribute to the success of Closing the Gap</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government welcomes and appreciates the role that local governments play in facilitating Closing the Gap initiatives within their community.</p> <p>The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is a signatory to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Despite having no direct responsibility for initiatives in the NSW Implementation Plan, we acknowledge LGNSW continues to participate in relevant Officer Led Working Groups (OLWGs), contributing to the design and monitoring of progress of initiatives.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has completed its partnership stocktake and is in the process of completing an</p>

	<p>analysis. Local councils were approached and gave a considerable number of responses. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, local councils may have a role to play in future work.</p>
<p>Provide funding to support councils to implement the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Toolkit for local government</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to addressing domestic, family, and sexual violence and appreciate your organisation's interest in this critical issue. At this time no uncommitted funds are available to meet this specific request.</p> <p>Currently, the NSW Liberal and National Government supports programs to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence, and help victim-survivors to safety. These programs include Core and Cluster, Safer Pathway, Staying Home Leaving Violence and Men's Behaviour Change Programs.</p> <p>Additionally, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government supports place based projects designed to address domestic violence. For example, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government supports the prevention of domestic and family violence at the local level by providing annual grants to Local Domestic and Family Violence Committees across NSW.</p>
<p>Commit to council-run early childhood education and care facilities being eligible for all new funding opportunities and grant programs for the early childhood education sector</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is investing \$15.9 billion over ten years in the Early Years Commitment. With our Early Years Commitment, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is making comprehensive investments in the critical first five years of life for every child.</p> <p>Every family should have access to affordable, quality early childhood education and care, no matter their circumstances or</p>

	<p>where they live. We know that the first five years of a child’s life are vital for their health, development, learning and wellbeing.</p> <p>Through the NSW Liberals and Nationals landmark reform, we are introducing a free year of preschool for all students in the year before school, a suite of Brighter Beginnings initiatives (such as development checks) to support the first 2,000 days of life, a workforce package for early childhood educators and Affordable Preschool subsidies available to all families. Local government services will have the opportunity to be a part of the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government’s Early Years Commitment.</p> <p>For further details on the Early Years Commitment, visit education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/early-years-commitment.</p>
Distribute arts and culture funding equitably across NSW	The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to grants programs that are transparent and in the public interest.
Commit to implementing in full the recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry into rural and regional health services	<p>The NSW Liberals and Nationals Government ‘supported’ or ‘supported in principle’ 41 of the 44 recommendations, the remaining three were ‘noted’, and we are working to implement them as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Work is already completed, underway or planned on 68 actions from within the response to recommendations, including work on those that were ‘noted’. Of these; 8 actions are completed and 59 are on track.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government appointed the first ever NSW Minister for Regional Health to address concerns</p>

	<p>raised in the inquiry and to ensure there is a dedicated focus on health outcomes. This has in turn seen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Regional Health Division created and led by a Coordinator General who sits at Deputy Secretary level to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Be a key driver in ensuring better outcomes for communities in regional, rural and remote NSW○ Sit at the top of the Ministry of Health to ensure all decisions have a regional lens and works with LHDs to identify opportunities○ Focus on improving community engagement throughout the system○ Address the recommendations in the Inquiry○ Provide a single point of contact and advocacy for issues that are common across the regional health system○ Lead on the priorities in the new Regional Health Strategic Plan• A Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel established to strengthen community engagement and foster genuine co-design principles for health services in regional NSW• An investment of \$883 million to attract and retain staff in rural and regional NSW by transforming the way health clinicians are incentivised in the bush, as well as build a sustainable pipeline of regionally based health workers• Publication of the new Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-32• Reimbursements of IPTAAS almost double with a \$149 million investment
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review to determine how health staff accommodation and the role of local health advisory councils in regional communities can be strengthened.
<p>Increase funding for specialised and appropriate youth and community wellbeing and mental health services to bolster resilience, particularly following disasters</p>	<p>The NSW Liberals and Nationals have invested \$2.9 billion in mental health services with a key focus on youth and community mental health and wellbeing. Key highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$143.4 million over four years to extend the Towards Zero Suicides initiatives which are designed to work together to prevent suicides occurring in our communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This includes our Safe Havens which provide an alternative to ED and do not require appointment or referral to access the free service • \$60.7 million over four years for Aftercare to support people who have attempted suicide or experienced suicidal crisis • \$46.5 million over four years to substantially expand and enhance headspace services, ensuring it can reach more young people across our state • \$28.5 million over four years for Lifeline to meet the increasing demand for mental health crisis services • \$26.4 million over four years to establish Head to Health hubs that will see multidisciplinary teams operating a 'no wrong door' approach to support adults experiencing mental health challenges • \$17.9 million over four years for new child health and wellbeing community based hubs for children to strengthen supports for parents, improve intervention early in life and increase access to multidisciplinary care.

	<p>The Liberals and Nationals Government are committed to providing mental health support for communities impacted by disasters – bushfires, COVID-19 or flood recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We invested \$25 million for a Mental Health Wellbeing Package for flood impacted communities in Northern NSW including support for Local Recovery Coordinators, 4 pop up Safe Havens, and engagement with Primary Health Networks • \$21.15 million over 5 years for Rural Adversity Mental Health Program coordinators • \$36.4 million for Response and Recovery Specialists including farm gate counsellors and disaster (bushfire) recovery clinicians.
<p>Commit to democratically elected councils being empowered to make decisions about development that affects their communities</p>	<p>Councils help shape and deliver housing policy objectives through their land use planning and community service responsibilities. Councils prepare local housing strategies in consultation with communities, to detail how and where housing will be provided in local areas.</p> <p>In Greater Sydney, the District plans require councils to prepare local housing strategies to address housing needs. This work informs 6–10-year housing targets for each local government area.</p>
<p>Make urgent improvements to address issues with operation of the Planning Portal and commit to ongoing funding to councils to implement it</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to upgrading and maintaining the Planning Portal.</p> <p>The NSW Planning Portal Program continues to release and enhance digital services through the Portal enabling the</p>

	<p>submission, assessment, and determination of planning applications online.</p> <p>The Liberals and Nationals are supporting the integration of the Portal with the IT systems of its stakeholders, to improve the flow of planning data across the state.</p>
<p>Adopt new accessibility standards for housing that have been recently inserted into the National Construction Code (in line with other States and territories across Australia)</p>	<p>Under consideration.</p>
<p>Invest in training to support para-professional, trades and entry-level pathways to employment in local government and to upskill councils' workforces in response to new and emerging jobs and work</p>	<p>Under the NSW Liberals and Nationals, Training Services NSW is collaborating with 53 local councils to lift the skills level of council workers through fee-free training for LGNSW occupations in demand.</p> <p>Fee-free training is being facilitated under the Smart and Skilled program. This enables access to nationally recognised training, including apprenticeships, traineeships and part qualifications in areas directly relevant to Council workforce. Examples include equipment operation, confined space training, asbestos awareness, electrical awareness, felling trees, water operations, childcare, aged care, customer service, digital skills, project management, civil construction management, first aid, infection control, flood recovery, veteran's programs, traffic control and leadership.</p> <p>Regarding council swimming pool workforce, the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has also funded 1,200 swim safety training places and 734 lifeguard training places across NSW in the past 12 months. An additional 1,000 places are being</p>

	<p>funded to meet sector demand. This assisted councils to keep their swimming pool facilities open and staffed.</p> <p>Under the NSW Liberals and Nationals Training Services NSW has worked with the Department of Sport and Recreation to develop the Local Government All-Rounder Traineeship to attract young people into jobs with local councils. The traineeship builds on government subsidised fee free swim teacher and lifeguard training to provide year-long employment with councils to help address worker shortages.</p> <p>The development of the Water Infrastructure Strategy by the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has ensured government funded training opportunities are available to operators of water treatment plants across NSW. An increase in the number of skilled workers is helping to reduce risks for councils providing potable water and sewerage services.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has also supported councils through the water operator traineeship program resulting in an additional 158 trainees entering the industry.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has developed the Local Council Veterans Employment Program. Under the program, veterans and their partners are receiving government subsidised training so they are job ready to fill skills gaps within local councils. Currently 11 councils are participating in the program with a number of other councils showing interest in the program.</p>
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<p>Allow for greater flexibility/overcoming barriers to accreditation/registration of professional and trades employees</p>	<p>Under the NSW Liberals and Nationals, the Training Services NSW Trade Pathways Program (TPP) addresses skills shortages by establishing additional pathways to trades and the increased representation of women and mature age workers.</p> <p>Trade Pathways for Experienced Workers leverages recognition of prior learning (RPL) and gap training to increase the number of qualified tradespeople. Experienced but unqualified local government employees can access this initiative to have their skills recognised.</p> <p>Connecting Women to Trades Grant Round and Trade Pathways Innovation Fund are TPP initiatives local government can participate in as either project lead or as a partner. Funded projects support innovative approaches to increase the women in trades and develop new industry-specific pathways to trades.</p>
<p>Ensure all areas of need have equitable access to VET and tertiary courses and educational institutions – including face-to-face training</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Smart and Skilled provides eligible students with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An entitlement to government-subsidised training up to and including Certificate III • Government funding for higher-level courses (Certificate IV and above) in targeted priority areas. <p>NSW Fee Free improves access to training for young people, job seekers, First Nations People, unpaid carers, women undertaking study in non-traditional trades and certain categories of visa holders. It does this by offering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full and part qualification courses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses at TAFE NSW and other Smart and Skilled contracted training providers, including Adult and Community Education providers • Enrolments until 31 December 2023. <p>Students are able to study a fee-free course if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 years old or over • No longer at school • Living or working in NSW • An Australian citizen, permanent resident, humanitarian visa holder or New Zealand citizen. <p>Under the NSW Liberals and Nationals TAFE has increased access to courses through Connected Learning Centres. The virtual, interactive, and real-time training delivered through these centres can be accessed on personal computers and at TAFE delivery points. TAFE aims to deliver face-to-face training where possible and most effective, such as in apprenticeships, nursing, and early childcare.</p> <p>TAFE supports disadvantaged students. TAFE is funded to provide support services to students who experience disadvantage. This includes those with a disability, language difficulties, mental health issues, disability, poor foundational skills (literacy, numeracy, digital), or limited access to online learning materials.</p>
<p>Drive local economic recovery through initiatives to address labour shortages impacting primary producers, businesses and councils across NSW</p>	<p>In the 2022-23 Budget the NSW Liberal and National Government invested \$2.6 billion on new initiatives to support the future economy and jobs of tomorrow through vocational</p>

	<p>education and training, skills, and commercialising new technologies.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is continuing to engage with the Commonwealth to progress a new National Skills Agreement and has signed an interim Skills Agreement focused on fee-free training by TAFE NSW and other Registered Training Organisations. As part of this, the Federal and State governments are aiming to deliver 120,000 fee-free TAFE and vocational education places from 2023.</p> <p>The NSW Liberals and Nationals have embarked on significant reform in skills and education from the 2021 Gonski-Shergold Review of VET Sector and adopting NSW Productivity Commission recommendations. This includes the Women in Trades pathway and future training delivery models being trialled through the Institutes of Applied Technology and New Education and Training Model.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has also recently made submissions to the Commonwealth's Employment White Paper and its review 'A Migration System for Australia's Future', advocating for immediate actions and ongoing, medium-to-long term priorities in education and training, migration, economic reform, care and education and the transition to net zero emissions. Our recommendations included improving migration processes to make them more responsive to skill shortages and industry needs.</p> <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government's \$3 billion investment in skills is supporting TAFE NSW and other Smart and Skilled providers in providing fee-free, nationally</p>
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	<p>recognised qualifications. The Department works closely with employers and registered training providers in each NSW region to ensure the selected qualifications align with job demand and meet employer needs.</p> <p>The Government has also funded \$15 million for Agskilled 2.0 which provides funded training for livestock, farmers and their workers.</p>
<p>Commit to incentives (such as scholarships, cadetships, wage subsidies) to address critical local government skills shortages</p>	<p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has committed to a range of incentives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee-free VET courses targeting apprentices, trainees and young people, supporting them in accessing training in priority qualifications • The establishment of two Institute of Applied Technology (IAT) campuses in digital and construction, providing stackable courses and micro-credentials in collaboration with industry, TAFE NSW and universities • A wide range of equity programs aimed at improving outcomes for groups such as women, refugees, First Nations and regional communities • Significant expansion of school-based programs such as school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SBATs). <p>The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government's IT Traineeship program is being expanded in 2023 to include local councils. In November 2022, Training Services NSW met with LGNSW and local councils to promote the program. As at 1 February 2023, presentations have been made to 32 councils. 14</p>

	<p>councils have agreed to participate, including seven outside the Sydney metropolitan region, with 15 traineeship roles identified.</p> <p>Wage subsidies have increased apprentice numbers Wage subsidies are a responsibility of the Commonwealth government. The temporary increases in wage subsidies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have been successful in stimulating the number of apprentices.</p> <p>The Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant adopts a number of strategies to develop and support Aboriginal people through the creation of training and employment opportunities. The Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant subsidises the salary, development and support costs of Aboriginal employees in public service agencies and local government authorities. In financial year 2022/23, local councils employed 39 school-based trainees.</p>
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