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SHIRE COUNCIL

Report of my attendance at the Australian Local Government Association 2023 National General Assembly 'Our Communities, Our Future', Canberra, 13th – 16th June, including the Australian Council of Local Government Forum.



In June I travelled to Canberra with Mayor of Indigo Shire, Sophie Price, to participate in the held Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) and the Australian Council of Local Government (ACLG).

This is the annual national conference for the local government sector where mayors, councillors, CEOs, council officers and industry experts converge in Canberra to listen, learn, share, and grow as a sector committed to the betterment of communities and futures all around Australia.

The week in Canberra was also during a Federal Parliament sitting week which meant it was a fantastic opportunity to bring Council's top five Advocacy Asks to various politicians in an array of portfolios.

I met with Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, Kristy McBain, and discussed our top 5 advocacy asks, with particular focus on the need for increased and improved funding to repair our extensive road network. I raised Kirwan's Bridge with Minister McBain and sought her support in providing critical funding for this iconic bridge so that residents can once again cross the Goulburn River and tourists can visit and experience this unique historic timber bridge in its full glory.

I met with Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Catherine King MP where she again raised the top five asks as well as the ARTC project.

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The returned Australian Council Local Government (ACLG), held for the first time in a decade, was a great chance to hear directly from Federal Government ministers about their commitment to the Australian Local Government sector and how they will work with Councils to ensure they are delivering the projects and programs that are needed at the local levels we know so well.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese spoke passionately about his genuine commitment to developing strong working relationships with local governments and trusting us to provide advice on what our community need.

The dedicated Minister for Local Government and the ACLG provides an opportunity for local governments to have a voice at the Federal level.

I met with Federal Member for Indi Dr Helen Haines MP in her office to again share Council's advocacy asks. Helen and her team assisted Council in securing a number of meetings and her support was very helpful. Developing and maintaining these strong partnerships with our political colleagues is critical to the success of our work ensuring we get the best outcomes for the Strathbogie Shire community.



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This was also the case with our other local minister Federal Member for Nicholls Sam Birrell MP who hosted me and also arranged meetings with many Shadow Ministers. Thank you to both Helen and Sam for their support.



Among the Shadow Ministers I met with were Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, Youth Angie Bell MP to discuss Nature Based Playspaces and the need for more early childhood education spaces and educators in Strathbogie Shire; Shadow Minister for Water, Emergency Management Senator Perin Davey to discuss the Greening Euroa project; Shadow Minister Trade and Tourism Kevin Hodge MP to speak about the impacts of climate related natural disasters, such as the October flood, which has had a significant impact on the tourism industry, especially in the Nagambie region, and on local agriculture production and trade.

I met with Shadow Minister Local Government Darren Chester MP and also shared our top 5 advocacy asks with him.

I also spoke of the need for a national standard of local government training for councillors that ensures elected representatives understand their role, responsibilities and are best equipped to advocate for their communities and to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of their council organisations.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have attended and represented Strathbogie Shire Council at these important events and thank my councillor colleagues for supporting me to attend.