

7.11 Boroondara City Council Motions to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government

Executive Summary

Purpose

This report informs councillors and seeks endorsement of a proposed motion regarding the funding arrangements for seniors centres and seniors groups which is proposed to be put forward to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly in June 2022.

Motions carried by the National General Assembly become Resolutions. These resolutions are then considered by the ALGA Board when setting national local government policy and will also feed into the Australian Council of Local Government processes.

Background

The National General Assembly of Local Government will be held in Canberra from Sunday 19 June to Wednesday 22 June 2022. The Assembly is a major event and typically attracts more than 600 Mayors, Councillors and Senior Officers from Councils across Australia.

The ALGA is calling for motions for the 2022 National General Assembly (NGA) under this year's theme 'Partners in Progress'.

Key Issues

A motion titled 'Funding for seniors centres and seniors groups' calling for the Australian Government to review the funding provided to local government to support seniors groups and to maintain seniors centres is proposed to be put forward to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly in June 2022.

This motion is considered a national issue due to the impact on local government's ability to provide operational support to older people should the Australian Government Sector Support and Development (SSD) funding be withdrawn from 1 July 2022.

On-going funding from the Australian Government is essential to ensure local governments can continue supporting older people to remain active and engaged.

Officers' recommendation

That Council resolve to adopt the motion (as annexed to the Minutes) to be put forward to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly in June 2022.

Responsible director: Phillip Storer, Chief Executive Officer

1. Purpose

This report informs councillors and seeks endorsement of a proposed motion regarding the funding arrangements for seniors centres and seniors groups which is proposed to be put forward to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly in June 2022.

2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

The ALGA is the peak body for local governments in Australia and takes a lead role in advocating to the Federal Government on a variety of issues of concern to local governments in Australia. Submitting motions to the ALGA National General Assembly is consistent with Council's practice of advocating on behalf of the community.

This report is consistent with strategic objective 7 within the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 to "*Ensure decisions are financially and socially responsible through transparent and ethical processes*".

3. Background

The National General Assembly of Local Government will be held in Canberra from Sunday 19 June to Wednesday 22 June 2022. The Assembly is a major event and typically attracts more than 600 Mayors, Councillors and Senior Officers from Councils across Australia.

The ALGA is calling for motions for the 2022 National General Assembly (NGA) under this year's theme 'Partners in Progress'.

To be eligible for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers, motions must follow the following principles:

1. be relevant to the work of local government nationally;
2. not be focused on a specific location or region - unless the project has national implications;
3. be consistent with the themes of the NGA;
4. complement or build on the policy objectives of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV); and
5. not be advanced on behalf of external third parties that may seek to use the NGA to pressure Board members or to gain national political exposure for positions that are not directly relevant to the work of, or in the national interests of, local government.

Motions must be received at ALGA by 5pm on Friday 25 March 2022.

Motions that are carried by the NGA become Resolutions. These resolutions are then considered by the ALGA Board when setting national local government policy and will also feed into the Australian Council of Local Government processes.

4. Outline of key issues/options

Attachment 1 provides the details of the proposed motion being put forward which is as follows:

- Motion 1 - Seniors groups and seniors centres (submitted by Community Support)

5. Consultation/communication

The proposed motion has been prepared in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team.

6. Financial and resource implications

There are no direct financial implications to Council in presenting this motion to the ALGA other than Council officer time in preparing and submitting the motion.

These costs are met from the Council operating budget.

7. Governance issues

The implications of this report have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon, the human rights contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

The officer responsible for this report has no general or material conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

8. Social and environmental issues

The motions to be considered at ALGA will cover a range of matters.

The motion sponsored by Council has the potential to achieve worthwhile results for the Boroondara community and the broader Australian community.

Manager: **Adele Thyer, Acting Manager Governance and Legal**
 Nick Lund, Manager Liveable Communities

1. Attachment 1 - National General Assembly 2022 [7.11.1 - 2 pages]

Attachment 1

National General Assembly (NGA)**19 to 22 June 2022****Motions Submitted by Members**

MOTION 1 FUNDING FOR SENIORS CENTRES AND SENIORS GROUPS
Submitted by: <i>Boroondara City Council</i>
MOTION <p>The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to review the funding provided to local government to support seniors groups and to maintain seniors centres.</p>
NATIONAL OBJECTIVE (MAX 100 WORDS) <p>[Why is this a national issue and why should this be debated at the NGA?]</p> <p>Local governments contribute millions of dollars to building and maintaining seniors centres and supporting seniors groups. These vital services help to reduce isolation, promote better health and wellbeing outcomes, and reduce reliance on Australian Government subsidised formal aged care services.</p> <p>The withdrawal of Australian Government Sector Support and Development (SSD) funding used to support seniors groups and seniors centres from 1 July 2022, will significantly impact local government's ability to provide operational support to older people.</p> <p>Ongoing funding from the Australian Government is essential to ensure local governments can continue supporting older people to remain active and engaged.</p>
SUMMARY OF KEY ARGUMENTS (MAX 300 WORDS) <p>Changes to the in-scope activities of the Australian Government funded Sector Support and Development (SSD) program have resulted in a loss of funding for seniors groups and local government-operated seniors centres.</p> <p>Historically, the Victorian Government funded Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to support the functions of seniors groups, however, this responsibility was transferred to the Australian Government when the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) was introduced in 2016.</p> <p>Since 2016, the Australian Government has provided funding to LGAs, through the SSD Program, to support seniors groups and supplement the high operational costs of maintaining seniors centres. LGAs have continued to fund development projects and maintenance to ensure these facilities remain fit for purpose.</p> <p>LGAs provide support to thousands of seniors groups and U3As (University of the Third Age) across Australia. In many instances, these groups are housed in LGA owned and maintained facilities.</p>

Attachment 1

In 2021, the Department of Health advised a change to the 'in-scope' activities delivered under SSD effective from 2022-23. The changed objectives of the program have resulted in funding for seniors groups and seniors centres no longer being in-scope for SSD funding.

LGAs were advised the only recourse to this loss of funding was to transfer the portion of SSD funding spent on seniors groups and seniors centres to the Social Support Program, a funded activity of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). This is an unacceptable solution as CHSP and seniors groups, operate at cross purposes.

Seniors groups are independent incorporated entities with their own governance structures, whereas social support by its very name, is a structured and managed program led by paid staff, in most cases through LGAs.

Under this proposal to transfer the funding to social support, seniors groups would lose their autonomy and independence.