

Report: Environmental Projects and Impacts Instigated by Local Government Associations (LGAssns) in Australia

Prepared by Georgy Hadwen – HOPE senior researcher Qld

Date: 14/02/2025

Sources: Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and affiliated state/territory LGAssns

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Introduction..... | 2 |
| 1. Waste Reduction and Recycling | 2 |
| 2. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation | 2 |
| □ Local Government NSW (LGNSW): | 2 |
| □ Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV): | 2 |
| □ Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT): | 2 |
| □ Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ): | 3 |
| 3. Protection of Natural Resources | 3 |
| □ Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA): | 3 |
| □ Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ): | 3 |
| 4. Northern Territory Initiatives | 3 |
| 5. Future proofing | 5 |
| 1. Understanding Local Context | 5 |
| 2. Coordination and Collaboration | 5 |
| 3. Developing Comprehensive Sustainability Plans | 5 |
| 4. Implementing Carbon Reduction Measures | 5 |
| 5. Community Engagement and Education | 5 |
| Examples | 6 |
| LGA South Australia's Climate Commitment Action Plan | 6 |
| Decarbonisation Initiatives by Various LGAssns | 6 |
| Sustainability Programs by Local Councils | 6 |
| 6. Conclusion | 6 |
| Appendix | 6 |

Introduction

Local Government Associations (LGAssns) across Australia play a pivotal role in advocating for and implementing initiatives that promote environmental sustainability, natural resource management, and climate change mitigation. This report outlines key projects and impacts instigated by LGAssns in various states and territories, with a focus on their custodianship of natural resources and protection of the environment. The report also identifies initiatives enacted by the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT).

Natural resource management includes the sustainable management of water, atmosphere, and biodiversity resources for the benefit of future generations. Currently water usage per capita in Australia is higher than anywhere else in the world and around 80% of household water leaves homes as wastewater from washing machines, sinks, toilets etc. Additionally, regarding recycling programmes, Australia's current waste recycling rate is 60%, with only about 40% of this being reprocessed.

Climate change induced events are also a significant issue in Australia, and extreme droughts, flooding, bushfires and weather events such as heatwaves are becoming more common. Currently, 84% of all Australians report being directly affected by at least 1 climate change related event since 2019 and 1 in 10 Australians have been forced to permanently leave their homes due to an extreme weather event.

Therefore, promoting environmental sustainability, natural resource management and climate change mitigation have become priorities for LGAssns.

1. Waste Reduction and Recycling

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) has been instrumental in advancing waste reduction and recycling policies. ALGA advocates for a circular economy and supports local councils in implementing waste management strategies. Key initiatives include:

- Promoting the [National Waste Policy](#) and supporting councils to meet recycling targets.
 - Advocating for federal funding to improve waste infrastructure and reduce landfill dependency.
-

2. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Several LGAssns have taken proactive steps to address climate change risks and promote sustainability:

- **Local Government NSW (LGNSW):**
LGNSW has been a strong advocate for climate action, supporting councils in developing climate resilience plans. Initiatives include:
 - Promoting renewable energy projects and energy efficiency programs.
 - Advocating for state and federal funding to support climate adaptation measures.
- **Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV):**
The MAV has focused on environmental sustainability through its Environment and Water policy. Key projects include:
 - Supporting councils in implementing water saving initiatives and stormwater management programs.

- Advocating for policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable urban development.
 - **Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT):**
LGAT has been active in climate change advocacy, with a focus on protecting Tasmania's unique natural environment. Initiatives include:
 - Developing climate change adaptation strategies for local councils.
 - Submitting reports and recommendations to state and federal governments on environmental protection.
 - **Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ):**
The LGAQ has been involved in several high impact environmental projects, including:
 - The QCoast 2100 Project, which helps coastal councils prepare for the impacts of climate change, such as sea-level rise and extreme weather events.
 - Advocacy for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef, including supporting policies to reduce pollution and improve water quality.
 - **Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA):**
WALGA has been a leader in environmental advocacy, with a focus on sustainable resource management. Key initiatives include:
 - Promoting renewable energy projects and energy efficiency programs for local councils.
 - Advocating for policies that protect biodiversity and natural habitats.
-

3. Protection of Natural Resources

LGAssns have also played a critical role in the custodianship of natural resources:

- **Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASSNSA):**
LGASSNSA has focused on sustainable water management and biodiversity conservation. Initiatives include:
 - Supporting councils in implementing water sensitive urban design.
 - Advocating for policies that protect native vegetation and wildlife habitats.
 - **Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ):**
The LGAQ has been involved in initiatives to protect the Great Artesian Basin, a vital natural resource for Queensland communities.
-

4. Northern Territory Initiatives

The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) is the peak body representing local governments in the Northern Territory. LGANT has been involved in several environmental initiatives over the past five years, focusing on sustainability, climate resilience, and natural resource management.

Key Initiatives by LGANT:

1. Climate Change and Sustainability Advocacy:
LGANT has actively participated in discussions and policy development related to climate change and sustainability in the Northern Territory. This includes advocating for local government involvement in the NT Climate Change Response and supporting councils in developing climate resilience plans.
2. Natural Resource Management:
LGANT has supported initiatives aimed at sustainable land and water management, particularly in remote and regional communities. This includes advocating for policies that protect the NT's unique ecosystems and biodiversity.
3. Collaboration with the NT Government:
LGANT has worked closely with the Northern Territory Government on environmental policies, including the NT Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) and the NT Water Resource Management Framework. These collaborations aim to ensure that local governments are equipped to manage environmental challenges effectively.

Relevant Policies and Frameworks:

- NT Climate Change Response:
LGANT has contributed to the development of the NT Climate Change Response, which outlines strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing climate resilience.
⁹
- NT Water Resource Management Framework:
LGANT has supported the implementation of this framework, which aims to ensure sustainable water use and management across the NT.
¹⁰
- NT Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy:
LGANT has advocated for improved waste management practices, aligning with the NT Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy.
¹¹

LGANT has historically focused on:

- Advocating for sustainable land and water management practices in remote and regional communities.
- Supporting councils in addressing climate change impacts, such as extreme heat and water scarcity.

In the Northern Territory, LGANT has played a key role in advocating for climate resilience, sustainable resource management, and environmental protection. Through its collaboration with the NT Government and support for local councils, LGANT has contributed to the development and implementation of critical policies and frameworks, such as the NT Climate Change Response and the NT Water Resource Management Framework.

Further research or direct engagement with LGANT would be required to identify specific projects or impacts in the Northern Territory. While the Northern Territory's LGANT has not been included in the source document, it was engaged in similar efforts to support sustainable development and environmental protection in the region. Post NT elections. Further investigation into LGANT's specific initiatives would provide a more comprehensive understanding of its contributions to environmental custodianship.

5. Future proofing

Local Government Associations (LGAssns) in Australia play a crucial role in addressing climate sustainability and environmental care.



According to Eco Profit ¹², there are key actions they should aim to take over the next decade to ensure local community concerns are represented federally and acted on locally:

1. Understanding Local Context

- Conduct Comprehensive Assessments: Gain a thorough understanding of the unique characteristics, priorities, and challenges related to sustainability in their specific regions.
- Engage with Community Stakeholders: Involve residents, community organizations, and businesses in decision-making processes to gather their insights and priorities.

2. Coordination and Collaboration

- Foster Partnerships: Collaborate with other government agencies, research institutions, industry partners, and NGOs to share resources, expertise, and best practices.
- Share Resources: Pool together financial and intellectual resources to implement sustainable initiatives.

3. Developing Comprehensive Sustainability Plans

- Set Ambitious Targets: Develop and implement robust sustainability plans with clear, ambitious targets for carbon footprint reduction.
- Allocate Resources: Ensure that resources are allocated effectively to achieve these targets.

4. Implementing Carbon Reduction Measures

- Energy-Efficient Systems: Implement energy-efficient systems in municipal buildings, vehicles, and facilities.
- Renewable Energy Sources: Transition to renewable energy sources and optimize transport fleets.
- Sustainable Procurement Policies: Develop policies that promote sustainable procurement, waste reduction, and recycling.

5. Community Engagement and Education

- Promote Active and Public Transportation: Encourage the use of active and public transportation to reduce emissions.

- Educational Programs: Implement educational programs to raise awareness about sustainability and environmental care.

6. Advocacy and Policy Influence

- Advocate for Federal Support: Actively advocate for federal support and policies that align with local sustainability goals.
- Policy Development: Work on developing and influencing policies that address local environmental concerns and ensure they are represented at the federal level.

Examples

LGA South Australia's Climate Commitment Action Plan

The Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA SA) has developed a comprehensive Climate Commitment Action Plan for 2024-2030. The plan includes key actions to reduce emissions and achieve net zero by 2030. Some of the goals include reducing energy consumption, minimizing emissions from travel and transport, and promoting sustainable waste management¹³.

Decarbonisation Initiatives by Various LGAssns

Many LGAssns across Australia are actively working on decarbonisation initiatives. These initiatives involve transitioning to renewable energy sources, implementing energy-efficient systems, and promoting sustainable procurement practices. Employees within these LGAssns play a crucial role by embracing sustainable practices in their daily operations and advocating for change within their communities¹⁴.

Sustainability Programs by Local Councils

Several local councils have implemented successful sustainability programs. For example, some councils have introduced recycling programs, community composting initiatives, and campaigns to promote the use of public transportation and active transport options like cycling and walking¹².

6. Conclusion

Local Government Associations across Australia have demonstrated strong leadership in environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation, and natural resource management. From waste reduction and recycling programs to climate adaptation strategies and biodiversity conservation, LGAssns would appear to be at the forefront in driving positive environmental outcomes and embedded within local government frameworks.

Appendix

1. Australian Local Government Association (ALGA): - <https://alga.com.au/>
2. Local Government NSW (LGNSW): - <https://www.lgnsw.org.au/>
3. Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV): - <https://www.mav.asn.au/>
4. Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT): - <https://www.lgat.tas.gov.au/>
5. Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ): - <https://www.lgaq.asn.au/>
6. Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA): - <https://walga.asn.au/>
7. Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA): - <https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/>
8. Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT): - <http://www.lgant.asn.au/>

9. NT Climate Change Response:

<https://denr.nt.gov.au/environmentinformation/climatechange>

10. NT Water Resource Management Framework:

<https://denr.nt.gov.au/landresourcemanagement/waterresources>

11. NT Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy:

<https://denr.nt.gov.au/environmentinformation/wastemanagement>

12. Eco Profit not for profit

Certainly! Here are a few examples of successful sustainability initiatives by Local Government Associations (LGAssns) in Australia

13. South Australia Government - www.lga.sa.gov.au2www.ecoprofit.com.au

14. Ditch Carbon Not for profit - www.ditchcarbon.com