

MEDIA RELEASE



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MURRAY RIVER GROUP'S LOCAL SOLUTIONS SUPPORTED BY COUNCILS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

Tuesday, 1 July 2025

The Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC) has continued its strong advocacy on behalf of northern Victorian communities in taking its message to Canberra last week, with seven motions to the National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) supported by delegates.

MRGC Chair, Cr Dan Straub, said the result reflected the strength of regional collaboration and the common sense approach to the solutions MRGC put forward to the challenges facing northern Victorian communities.

"This is a great endorsement of our advocacy as a united group of councils," Cr Straub said. "We spoke with one voice on some of the big issues facing our communities and I am pleased to say our message was heard loud and clear."

The Group also advocated directly to the Federal Minister for Local Government, Regional Development and Emergency Management the Hon. Kristy McBain MP.

"We were grateful Minister McBain met with us and she clearly listened and heard these key challenges facing our Councils," said Cr Straub.

The motions, developed by MRGC member Councils and presented by Loddon Shire on their behalf, tackled critical issues including housing shortages, road and infrastructure repair and resilience, local government financial sustainability, energy transition impacts, swimming pool upgrades, and water reform in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Cr Straub said the success of all seven motions showed the clear alignment between MRGCs regional priorities and national concerns.

"Every motion we put forward was grounded in the lived experiences of our towns and rural industries," he said. "We made the case for common-sense, local solutions that can deliver safer regional roads, more homes in our towns, safeguard our



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Rural City Council



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Shire Council



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irrigation districts and ensure our communities benefit from the energy transition that is happening right here in our region" said Cr Straub.

The adopted motions call for:

- A Regional Infrastructure Resilience Fund to upgrade assets before disasters strike;
- A multi-year fund to unlock regional housing development by investing in trunk infrastructure such as water, drainage, sewers, power and roads;
- A national funding commitment to help repair and maintain the crumbling local road network;
- Renewal of our regional pools to maintain water safety and strong communities; and
- An end to damaging open-market water buybacks, calling instead for local leadership in future Basin Plan reform.

"Our communities are shouldering more responsibility with fewer resources," Cr Straub said. "The Assembly gave us the platform to say that has to change and we're proud that the broader local government sector stood with us."

The MRGC's delegation included councillors and officers from all six member councils: Mildura, Swan Hill, Gannawarra, Campaspe, Loddon and Moira.

"We're grateful to ALGA for what was a thought provoking and worthwhile conference and we'll continue to work with all levels of government to turn these motions into real outcomes for our region," Cr Straub said.

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Spokesperson: Cr Dan Straub, Chair, Murray River Group of Councils

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Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC) delegates including Mayors (/ Administrators) and CEOs from all six member Councils (Moir, Campaspe, Loddon, Gannawarra, Swan Hill and Mildura) attended the National General Assembly (NGA) of the Australian Local Government Association in Canberra from 24 – 27 June 2025.



Murray River Group of Councils meeting with Hon. Kristy McBain, Minister for Local Government, in Canberra on Wednesday 25 June 2025.

L to R: Susan Benedyka, Administrator, Moira Shire; Graeme Emonson, Chair Administrator, Moira Shire; Cr Daniel Mackrell, Mayor Campaspe Shire; Pauline Gordon, CEO, Campaspe Shire; Martin Hawson, CEO Mildura Rural City Council; Cr Dan Straub, Chair Murray River Group of Councils & Mayor, Loddon Shire; Hon. Kristy McBain, Minister for Emergency Management Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories; Geoff Rollinson (standing), CEO Gannawarra Shire, Cr Stuart King, Mayor Swan Hill Rural City Council, Cr Helen Healy, Mayor Mildura Rural City Council; Cr Garner Smith, Mayor, Gannawarra Shire.



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