Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Joint Communiqué: Local Government Ministerial Forum #16
19 October 2026

Local Government Ministers from across Australia met virtually on Monday 19 October 2026 for the Local Government Ministers' Forum (LGMF) to advance inter-governmental cooperation on issues affecting local governments across Australia.

The Chair welcomes Minister Rhiannon Pearce and Minister Tim Richardson to their first Local Government Ministers' Forum. The Chair acknowledged the contributions of the former Victorian Local Government Minister, Nick Staikos and former South Australian Local Government Minister, Joseph Szakacs.

Examining Financial Sustainability
Ministers received an update on the new Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability, adopted on 6 November 2025, with revised terms of reference reflecting stakeholder feedback and focusing on funding arrangements, intergovernmental interactions, and funding effectiveness. Ministers noted the Committee's extensive hearing program across Australia and look forward to the committee's final report and recommendations.

Ministers acknowledged the Australian Government's commitment to establishing a five-year federation compact with local government and noted the proposal has been welcomed by local government associations and industry unions. They also noted the Government will now consider how best to implement the compact, in close consultation with jurisdictions, local government associations and unions.

Accounting for Asset Depreciation
Ministers presented an examination of the application of depreciation accounting standards within systems of assessing local government performance and sustainability. Ministers agreed to present their findings in a report for consideration to treasurers through the Council on Federal Financial Relations.

Safety for women, elective representatives and workers in local government

Ministers noted the Women for Election report *A Threat to Gender Equity and Democratic Representation* findings that online abuse against women in politics is a systemic issue that affects personal safety, democratic participation and representation, including decisions to run for office, remain in office and participate in public debate. Ministers discussed increasing incidences of anti-social behaviour directed towards elected councillors and local government employees. Ministers agreed to consider opportunities to implement nationally consistent laws which protect and support local government workers and elective representatives and report back to a future meeting.

*The Chair noted that the incident involving Dr Helen Haines MP, Member for Indi, occurred shortly after LGMF #16. On behalf of all LGMF members, the Chair expressed concern regarding the incident and wished Dr Haines a swift recovery.

Next Meeting
Ministers will meet again in the first half of 2027.

Attendance
The 16th meeting of the LGMF was attended by:

The Hon Kristy McBain MP (Chair) (Commonwealth)	Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories; Emergency Management
Dr David Clapham (ACT)	A/g Executive Group Manager, Intergovernmental and Strategic Policy, Policy and Cabinet, on behalf of Chief Minister; Minister for Economic Development; Tourism and Trade
Ms Jenn Hickey (New South Wales)	Acting Deputy Secretary, Office of Local Government, on behalf of the Hon Ron Hoenig MP, Minister for Local Government
The Hon Steven (Steve) Edgington MLA (Northern Territory)	Minister for Health; Mental Health; Alcohol Policy; Aboriginal Affairs; Housing, Local Government and Community Development; Essential Services
The Hon Kerry Vincent MLP (Tasmania)	Minister for Infrastructure and Transport; Local Government; Housing and Planning
The Hon Rhiannon Pearce MP (South Australia)	Minister for Emergency Services; Local Government; Recreation, Sport and Racing
Mr Sean Dillon MP (Queensland)	Assistant Minister for Primary Industry Development, Water and Western Queensland, on behalf of the Hon Ann Leahy MP Minister for Local Government and Water; Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers
The Hon Tim Richardson MP (Victoria)	Minister for Local Government; Consumer Affairs; Renters
The Hon Hannah Beazley MLA (Western Australia)	Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Volunteering; Youth
Mayor Matt Burnett	President of the Australian Local Government Association Mayor of Gladstone Regional Council