



# Future Focused

Call for Motions  
Discussion Paper 2019

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National General Assembly  
of Local Government **2019**

16—19 June 2019



## KEY DATES

End of November 2018  
Opening of Call for Motions

29 March 2019  
Acceptance of motions close

16 - 19 June 2019  
National General Assembly

## SUBMITTING MOTIONS

The National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) is an important opportunity for you and your council to influence the national policy agenda.

To assist you to identify motions that address the theme of the NGA, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Secretariat has prepared this short discussion paper. You are encouraged to read all of the sections of the paper, but are not expected to respond to every question. Your motion/s can address one or all of the issues identified in the discussion paper.

To be eligible for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers, and subsequent debate on the floor of the NGA, motions must meet the following criteria:

1. be relevant to the work of local government nationally
2. be consistent with the themes of the NGA
3. complement or build on the policy objectives of your state and territory local government association
4. be submitted by a council which is a financial member of their state or territory local government association
5. propose a clear action and outcome
6. not be advanced on behalf of external third parties that may seek to use the NGA to apply pressure to 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 should generally be in a form that seeks the NGA's support for a particular action or policy change at the Federal level which will assist local governments to meet local community needs. For example: That this National General Assembly call on the Federal Government to restore funding for local government financial assistance grants to a level equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

Motions should be lodged electronically using the online form available on the NGA website at: [www.alga.asn.au](http://www.alga.asn.au). All motions require, among other things, a contact officer, a clear national objective, a summary of the key arguments in support of the motion, and endorsement of your council. Motions should be received no later than 11:59pm on Friday 29 March 2019.

Please note that for every motion it is important to complete the background section on the form. Submitters of motions should not assume knowledge. The background section helps all delegates, including those with no previous knowledge of the issue, in their consideration of the motion.

All motions submitted will be reviewed by the ALGA Board's NGA Sub-Committee as well as by state and territory local government associations to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers. When reviewing motions, the Sub-Committee considers the importance and relevance of the issue to local government. Please note that motions should not be prescriptive in directing how the matter should be pursued. With the agreement of the relevant council, motions may be edited before inclusion in the NGA Business Papers to ensure consistency. If there are any questions about the substance or intent of a motion, ALGA will raise these with the nominated contact officer. Any motion deemed to be primarily concerned with local or state issues will be referred to the relevant state or territory local government association, and will not be included in the NGA Business Papers.

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this discussion paper is to provide guidance to councils developing Motions for Debate at the 2019 National General Assembly. This will be the 25th National General Assembly and will focus on the future of local government and local communities. It will consider what Councils can do today to get ready for the challenges, opportunities and changes that lie ahead.

Local governments across Australia already face a host of challenges including financial constraints, adapting to rapidly evolving technologies and community expectations of access to 24/7 services via websites, mobiles and call centres, changes in demographics and population size and preferred means of community engagement. It is unlikely that these challenges will disappear. In some cases, they will be compounded by climate change, the ageing population and further advances in disruptive technologies including artificial intelligences.

The challenges may also be exacerbated by increasing community expectations about the level and types of services and infrastructure provided by councils and the community's willingness to pay. The community, as council's customers, are increasingly growing accustomed to steadily falling prices for better products and services such as cars, computers, overseas travels. Exceptions to this are housing and in many cases government services such as health care and tertiary education. Another exception is council rates. While a number of states have capped rates, rates across the nation typically continue to rise.

In the case of rates, local communities can perceive that they are being asked to pay more money for the same product. The community may feel that they are paying enough and are therefore unlikely to be supportive of rate rises or swing behind the call for increased federal funding for local government ( $\geq 1\%$  FAGs).

## KEY QUESTIONS

**This therefore raises the questions of:**

1. What can local governments do differently now, and in the future, to deliver more for less?
  - o Are there new business models and new partnerships, new technologies and the willingness to reduce, phase out or change existing practices, opportunities for more sophisticated service planning and more efficient procurement?
2. How can local governments collaborate, be entrepreneurial and embrace disruption and innovation?
3. How can the Commonwealth Government help local governments prepare for the future and why should they care?
  - o What are the opportunities for leveraging regional, state and national partnerships?

# THE PRESENT

## Demographics

In 2018 the Australian population reached the 25 million mark.

73% of the population lives in stand-alone houses, while 27% of the population live in homes such as flats, apartments, semi-detached, row houses and town houses. 38% of occupied apartments are in high rise blocks with four or more storeys. That's up from 18% in 2006.

67% of Austalians live in capital cities, 23% in other urban areas and 10% live in rural Australia. In total more than 90% of our population lives within 100km of the coast making us one of the world's most urbanised coastal dwelling populations. 86% of all Aussie households have internet access at home.

Australia has an aging population and we're also living longer with almost 4,000 people over the age of 100. In 2017, 308,000 babies were born. As a population, we're made up of more than six million families and they come in all shapes and sizes<sup>1</sup>.

## Diversity and culture

Australia has one of the most multicultural populations in the world with more than 300 different ancestries and 28% of our resident population born overseas — nearly 7 million people. Across the country more than 300 languages are spoken.

At the 2016 Census 50.7% of the population was female. However, gender equality advances have stalled across the local government sector. The rates of women in senior positions are far lower than any other tier of government. At the last round of local government elections, women accounted for just 32 per cent of all candidates and were elected to 30 per cent of positions. Even fewer (24 per cent) mayoral candidates were women but almost all were elected. Women account for 46 per cent of staff positions but this falls as the management level rises. Only 11 per cent of council chief executives are women<sup>2</sup>.

At the 2016 Census Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 2.8 per cent of the Australian population (approximately 649,000 out of 23.4 million people). Only eight politicians who identify as Indigenous have served in the Federal Parliament with six of those having been elected since 2010<sup>3</sup>. With the exception of a small number of local governments it is expected that there are very few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders holding elected or senior executive positions in local government (data is not available for this issue).

According to the 2016 Census, almost 50 per cent of Australians were born overseas or had a parent born overseas. Census data also indicates that almost one quarter of Australians speak languages other than English in their homes. State and federal parliaments and local governments should reflect contemporary Australia but fail to do so.

A 2016 report by the Australian Human Rights Commission revealed that 1.61 per cent of federal and state public service heads of department, and 0 per cent of federal Ministers and Assistant Ministers come from a non-European background. In the federal parliament 79 per cent of the 226 elected members in the Australian Parliament have an Anglo-Celtic background, 16 per cent have a European background and those from a non-European background make up less than four per cent of the total<sup>4</sup>. There are no statistics available about cultural diversity in local government.

Fair Work Australia statistics indicate that workers compensation claims involving alleged bullying in local government were among the second highest of all sectors in 2017, with 42.2 claims per 100 million hours worked in 2017, up from being the third highest in 2016<sup>5</sup>.

## Roles and funding

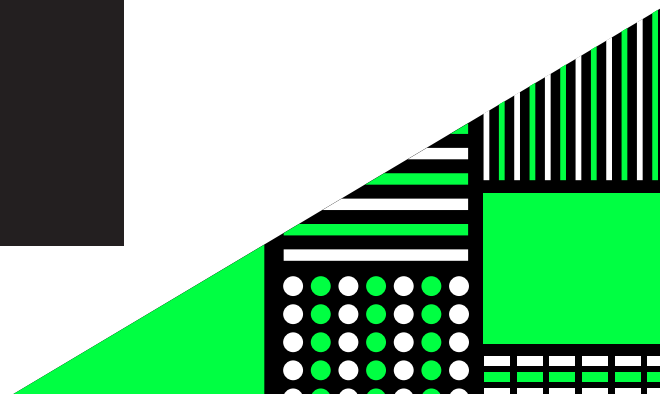
The scale and functional scope of local government spending has been subject to significant change over the last two decades. According to a report by the McKell Institute there has been a fourfold increase in spending by local governments in nominal terms (7.3% p.a. compound growth rate) from total outlays of A\$8.2 billion in 1994-95 to A\$33.6 billion in 2014-15 and \$35.9 billion in 2016-17 despite the fact that in some jurisdictions significant public service responsibilities (such as water and sewerage) have been stripped out from local government.

Causes for the increase in functions undertaken by local government<sup>6</sup> include cost shifting, the need to address market failure (particularly in rural areas where it is commonly not financially viable for the private sector to provide essential goods and services such as aged care or childcare) and increasing community demand which has been rising steeply over the past two decades.

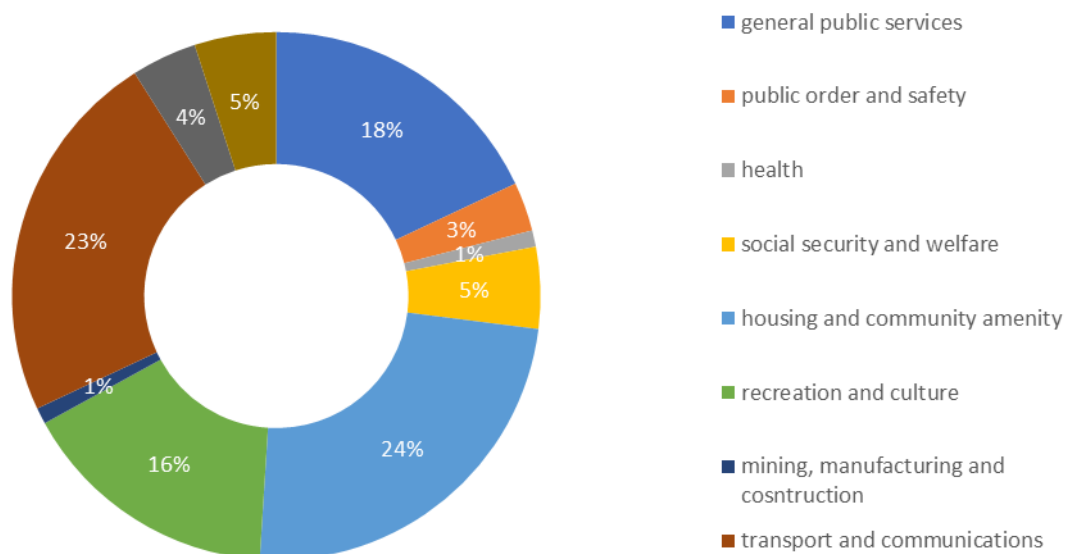
A gap has emerged between the community's propensity to pay for various amenities and the cost to council in providing those services. This has resulted in local governments under-charging and failing to effectively demonstrate the cost to consumers.

## KEY QUESTION

*What can local governments do differently?*



**AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING BY CATEGORY**  
2014-15 (total outlays \$33.6billion)

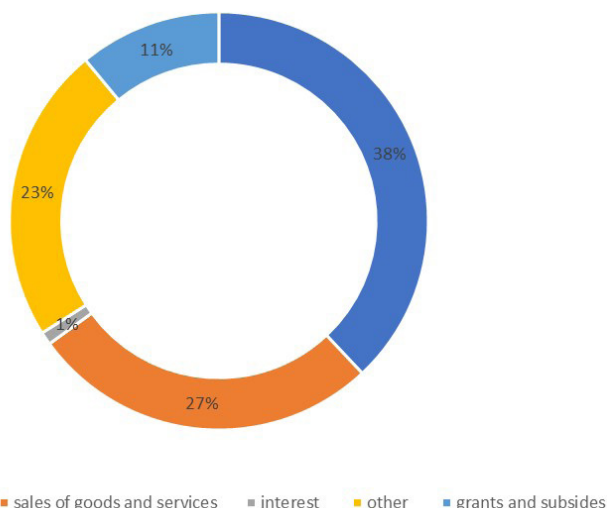


The following table demonstrates some of the key changes in local government expenditure between 2011-12 to 2016-17

Expense by purpose	Proportion of total expenditure	
	2011-12	2016-17
Transport and communications	23.7%	21.5%
Housing and community services	22.3%	24.2%
General public service	18.3%	17.6%
Recreation and culture	15%	16.6%
Social security and welfare	5.3%	4.8%
Other purpose	3.9%	4.2%
Other economic affairs	3.6%	3.6%
Public order and safety	2.6%	2.5%
Public debt transaction	2.1%	1.8%
Health	1.3%	1.2%
Mining, manufacturing and construction	1.2%	1.0%
Education	0.5%	0.6%
Fuel and energy	0.1%	0%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.1%	0.1%
Total in \$\$	\$30.6b	\$35.9b

Between 2011-12 and 2016-17 local government revenue increased from \$36 billion to \$45.5 billion. Of this 88% (in 2011-12) and 89% (in 2016-17) was own source revenue<sup>7</sup>. Funding from the Commonwealth Government in the form of Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) was \$2.14 billion in 2011-12 and \$2.29 billion (following the end on the freeze to indexation).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE BY SOURCE 2016-17



## KEY QUESTIONS

*How can the Commonwealth Government help local governments?*

*Why should they care?*

Total assets increased from \$350 billion in 2011-12 to \$467 billion in 2017-18. It has been estimated that the gross replacement value of local government infrastructure for all Australian councils was \$438 billion in 2014. 11% or \$47 billion of assets are in poor or very poor condition and require renewal or upgrade. Seven per cent or \$31 billion of the asset stock has poor function requiring upgrading to meet current or emerging local and regional service level targets for safety, compliance, social, environmental and economic performance. A further seven per cent or \$31 billion of assets have poor capacity and require augmenting to support growth and meet service needs<sup>8</sup>.

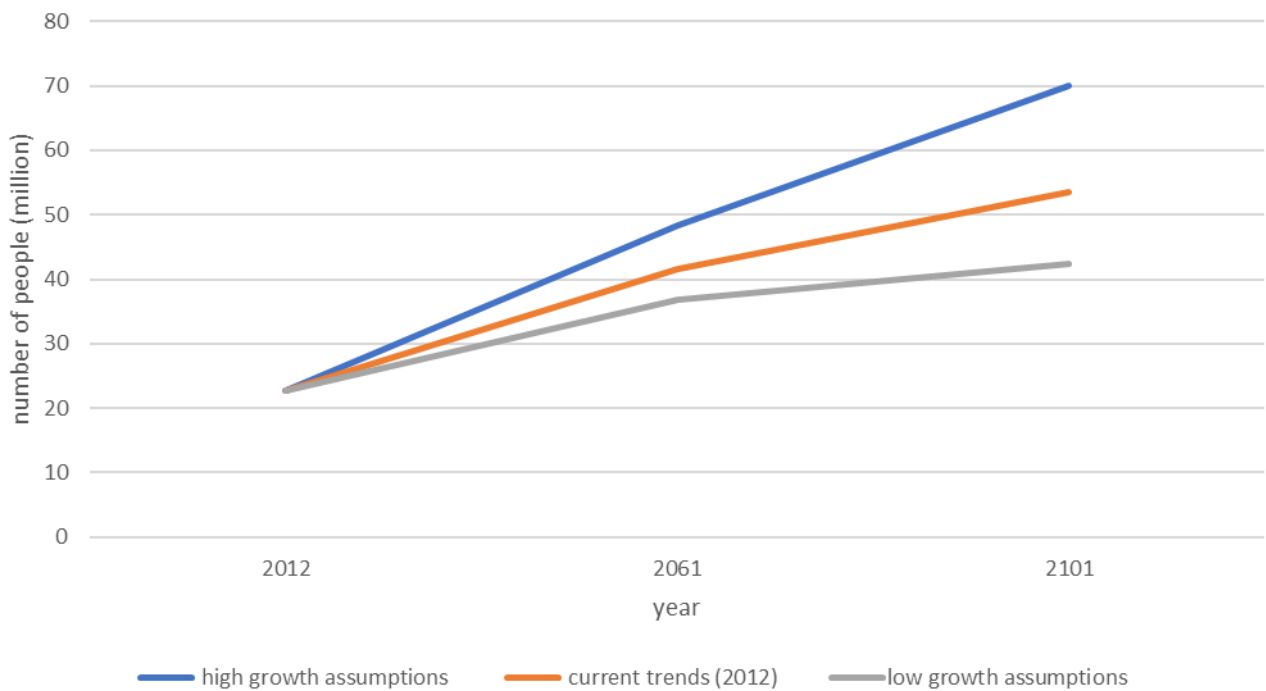
## THE FUTURE

### Demographics

Population projections by the Australian Bureau of Statistics illustrate the growth and change in population which would occur if certain assumptions about the future level of fertility, mortality, internal and overseas migration were to prevail over a projection period. Based on an estimated resident population of 22.7 million people at 30 June 2012 the population has been projected to increase to between 36.8 and 48.3 million people by 2061 and to between 42.4 and 70.1 million by 2101.

The median age of Australia's population (37.3 years at 30 June 2012) is projected to increase to between 38.6 years and 40.5 years in 2031 (high growth and low growth respectively) and to between 41.0 years and 44.5 years in 2061.

## AUSTRALIA'S PROJECTED POPULATION



Source: ABS Population projections, Australia 2012 3222.0

Assuming the current (2012) trends continuing, the population will grow in all states and territories except Tasmania. All capital cities except Darwin are projected to experience higher percentage growth than their respective state or territory balances, resulting in a further concentration of Australia's population within the capital cities. In 2012, 66% of Australians lived in a capital city. By 2061 this proportion is projected to increase to 74%.

## KEY QUESTIONS

*What partnerships, business models  
can help local Government  
deliver more with less?*



		2061		
State	2012	Low growth scenarios (C)	Current trend (B)	High growth scenario
<b>NSW total</b>	7.3 million	10.8 million	11.5 million	12.6 million
Sydney	4.7 million	8.0 million	8.5 million	8.9 million
Balance	2.6 million	2.9 million	3 million	3.7 million
<b>Victoria Total</b>	5.6 million	9.0 million	10.3 million	12.1 million
Melbourne	4.2 million	7.6 million	8.6 million	9.8 million
Balance	1.4 Million	1.4 million	1.7 million	2.3 million
<b>Queensland total</b>	4.6 million	7.9 million	9.3 million	11.1 million
Brisbane	2.2 million	3.8 million	4.8 million	5.6 million
Balance	2.4 million	4.1 million	4.5 million	5.5 million
<b>Western Australia total</b>	2.4 million	5.4 million	6.4 million	7.7 million
Perth	1.9 million	4.4 million	5.4 million	6.6 million
Balance	500,000	975,000	950,800	1.1 million
<b>South Australia total</b>	1.7 million	2.1 million	2.3 million	2.6 million
Adelaide	1.3 million	1.7 million	1.9 million	2.2 million
Balance	377,900	373,700 *	387,400	451,200
<b>Tasmania Total</b>	512,200	460,900 #	565,700 #	714,000
Hobart	217,000	228,700	270,600	339,300
Balance	295,400	232,200	295,100	374,700
<b>Northern Territory total</b>	235,200	455,700	453,000	457,800
Darwin	131,900	254,800	225,900	182,000
Balance	103,200	203,000	227,100	273,700
<b>ACT Total</b>	375,100	612,400	740,900	904,100

\* In the low growth scenario, the population for the balance of South Australia is projected to increase marginally over the next twenty years, peaking at 398,100 in 2033, before declining to 373,700 in 2061.

# In the current trend scenario (2012) Tasmania's population increases slowly before levelling out by around 2046 and then decreasing marginally from 2047 onwards. In the low growth scenario Tasmania's population increases only slightly over the first 15 years and begins to decline from 2028 onwards<sup>9</sup>.

In the high growth scenario, Australia's growth rate initially increases to 1.9% per year and remains above the 20-year average (1.3%) until the middle of the century. Over the second half of the century, growth rates gradually decline, reaching 1.0% in 2071 and 0.8% in 2101. In the current (2012) trend scenario Australia's annual growth rate decreases from 1.7% in 2012 to 1.0% in 2045, and to 0.5% in 2101. In the low growth scenario Australia's annual growth rate decreases at a faster rate, reaching 1.0% in 2031 and 0.2% in 2101.

## Climate Change

The CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology have compiled different models for predicting the outcome of climate change in Australia. According to this work, droughts are predicted to increase in a large portion of southern Australia, ("medium" level of confidence). It is predicted that in the main the southern half of Australia will experience less rainfall in winter, spring or both (high or medium confidence). Every part of Australia will continue to experience increases in average temperature, and will have a higher frequency of hot days. This will also result in higher evaporation across Australia, which will continue to make drought conditions worse in the future.

People living in large cities can be more susceptible than non-urban dwellers to the effects of heatwaves as a result of the urban heat island effect. This is caused by the prevalence in cities of heat absorbing materials such as dark coloured pavements and roofs, concrete, urban canyons trapping hot air, and a lack of shade and green space in dense urban environments. It can result in substantially higher temperatures (particularly overnight) than surrounding non-urban areas.



<https://www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au/en/climate-projections/future-climate/regional-climate-change-explorer/super-clusters/>

## Northern Australia

- Average temperatures will continue to increase in all seasons (very high confidence).
- More hot days and warm spells are projected with very high confidence.
- Changes to rainfall are possible but unclear.
- Increased intensity of extreme rainfall events is projected, with high confidence.
- Mean sea level will continue to rise and height of extreme sea-level events will also increase (very high confidence).
- With medium confidence, fewer but more intense tropical cyclones are projected.

## The Rangelands

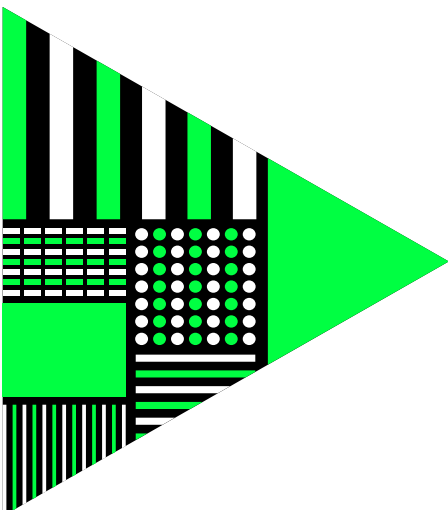
- Average temperatures will continue to increase in all seasons (very high confidence).
- More hot days and warm spells are projected with very high confidence. Fewer frosts are projected with high confidence.
- Changes to summer rainfall are possible but unclear. Winter rainfall is projected to decrease in the south with high confidence.
- Increased intensity of extreme rainfall events is projected, with high confidence.
- Mean sea levels will continue to rise and height of extreme sea-level events will also increase (very high confidence).

## Eastern Australia

- Average temperatures will continue to increase in all seasons (very high confidence).
- More hot days and warm spells are projected with very high confidence. Fewer frosts are projected with high confidence.
- Average winter and spring rainfall is projected to decrease with medium confidence. Changes in summer and autumn are possible but unclear.
- Increased intensity of extreme rainfall events is projected, with high confidence.
- Mean sea level will continue to rise and height of extreme sea-level events will also increase (very high confidence).
- A harsher fire-weather climate in the future (high confidence).

## Southern Australia

- Average temperatures will continue to increase in all seasons (very high confidence).
- More hot days and warm spells are projected with very high confidence. Fewer frosts are projected with high confidence.
- A continuation of the trend of decreasing winter rainfall is projected with high confidence. Spring rainfall decreases are also projected with high confidence. Changes to summer and autumn rainfall are possible but less clear.
- Increased intensity of extreme rainfall events is projected, with high confidence.
- Mean sea level will continue to rise and height of extreme sea-level events will also increase (very high confidence).
- A harsher fire-weather climate in the future (high confidence).



## KEY QUESTIONS

*How can local governments collaborate, build partnerships to address climate change?*

*Table 1 Climate Change Projections for selected Australian Cities*

Variable	2030 (intermediate emission scenario)	2090 (intermediate emission scenario)	2090 (high emission scenario)
<b>Adelaide</b>			
Temperate	0.7	1.5	2.9
Rainfall (%)	-4	-7	-9
Days over 35°C (currently 20)	26	32	47
<b>Alice Springs</b>			
Temperate	1	2.1	4.4
Rainfall (%)	-2	-5	-4
Days over 35°C (currently 94)	113	133	168
<b>Brisbane</b>			
Temperate	0.9	1.8	3.7
Rainfall (%)	-4	-9	-16
Days over 35°C (currently 12)	18	27	55
<b>Cairns</b>			
Temperate	0.7	1.4	2.9
Rainfall (%)	0	-2	-2
Days over 35°C (currently 3)	5.5	11	48
<b>Canberra</b>			
Temperate	0.8	1.8	3.8
Rainfall (%)	-2	-6	-5
Days over 35°C (currently 20)	7.1	12	29
<b>Darwin</b>			
Temperate	0.9	1.8	3.7
Rainfall (%)	0	-1	+4
Days over 35°C (currently 11)	43	111	265
<b>Dubbo</b>			
Temperate	1	2.1	4.2
Rainfall (%)	-2	-4	-6
Days over 35°C (currently 22)	31	44	65
<b>Hobart</b>			
Temperate	0.6	1.4	2.9
Rainfall (%)	1	-1	-2
Days over 35°C (currently 1.6)	2	2.6	4.2
<b>Melbourne</b>			
Temperate	0.6	1.5	3
Rainfall (%)	-2	-7	-9
Days over 35°C (currently 11)	13	16	24
<b>Perth</b>			
Temperate	0.8	1.7	3.5
Rainfall (%)	-6	-12	-18
Days over 35°C (currently 28)	36	43	63
<b>Sydney</b>			
Temperate	0.9	1.8	3.7
Rainfall (%)	-3	-2	-3
Days over 35°C (currently 3.1)	4.3	6	11

Source: Webb, L.B. and Hennessy, K. 2015, *Projections for selected Australian cities*, CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology, Australia.

## Employment

Into the future, some of the most significant factors influencing employment will include change in industry structure, technological advances and globalisation. The trend towards employment requiring skills and training is also set to continue. The CSIRO estimates that while 44 per cent of Australian jobs are potentially at high risk of automation, this technology will also be responsible for the creation of new jobs. A projected growth area for regional economies is in the human services-related industries, particularly health care and social assistance for an ageing population. This will have significant implications for regional populations as service industries are more likely to cluster in regional centres than in smaller towns and rural areas. Tourism and related industries such as accommodation, food services and retail trade are also expected to continue to deliver economic growth in regional areas with help from the low Australian dollar. The knowledge economy, science, technology and finance will drive employment growth in urban areas.

## Technology

The pace of technological change at present is increasing and almost daily we hear of new technologies that will disrupt existing markets and change the way our communities live, work, play and travel. It is difficult to predict which of these new technologies will come to fruition, let alone the full impact that they will have. It is also difficult to predict what is likely to occur in the future in terms of the type of technological changes and the speed of change. Forward planning is therefore problematic but it is reasonably safe to assume that drones and electric vehicles and semi-or fully autonomous vehicles (self-driving cars) will be part of our future. These will have dramatic impact on the look and feel of our communities and the services and infrastructure needed to support them.

Local government services that utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI) are already emerging. AI has the ability to tap into social media to learn about problems in real time. When people post or tweet about issues in the local area AI powered systems can improve council response times and reduce costs. Predictive elements in AI help councils analyse infrastructure issues and fix small problems before they grow larger. Modern systems can track water pressure and alert workers to fix pipes before they burst. The application of blockchain should allow local councils to reduce a great amount of transaction costs in the delivery of local services, while also providing greater transparency and participation for citizens.

Contact centre chat bots ( virtual customer service assistants) can help the public to pay parking fines and rates, or apply for a permit at any time. Customer service AI can help community members find the information they need. Website AI can help individuals navigate online services. Some AI can even help residents with applications, guiding them through the process and suggesting additional services.

## KEY QUESTIONS

*How can local government embrace disruption and innovation?*

AI technology is an opportunity to reimagine how future services can be delivered as well as gain value in:

- Reducing demand on services
- Improving efficiencies
- Enhancing the customer experience
- Driving better decision making from data insights

AI technology will not displace a team or service but complement it to truly be user-centric. It can reduce the burden of administrative tasks enabling staff to put their skills to more strategic and creative tasks and gain faster access to valuable insights. In doing so, the council is empowered to make better decisions for citizens.

AI has benefits for the workplace and citizens alike helping solve a problem and improving the lives of citizens. AI can have an enabling role in achieving this for local government today and for the 'council of the future.'

## REFERENCES

### PAGE FIVE - THE PRESENT:

<sup>1</sup> Interesting Facts about Australia's 25,000,000 population <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Interesting+Facts+about+Australia%E2%80%99s+population>

<sup>2</sup> Evans, M and Haussegger, V (2017) why are women so poorly represented in local government administrative leadership and what can be done about it? <http://www.5050foundation.edu.au/assets/reports/documents/online-gender-diversity-co-design-workshop-1-.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Joint select committee on constitutional recognition relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (2018) Interim report. The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission (2016) The 'Leading for Change' blueprint

<sup>5</sup> Clark, G (2018) Bullying endemic in councils, Fair Work turns staff away. Government News [https://www.governmentnews.com.au/bullying-endemic-in-councils-fair-work-turns-staff-away/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Newsletter%20-%2011th%20September%202018&utm\\_content=Newsletter%20-%2011th%20September%202018+Version+B+CID\\_250d36654e64011424c76af2e32234e8&utm\\_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm\\_term=Bullying%20endemic%20in%20councils%20Fair%20Work%20turns%20staff%20away](https://www.governmentnews.com.au/bullying-endemic-in-councils-fair-work-turns-staff-away/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter%20-%2011th%20September%202018&utm_content=Newsletter%20-%2011th%20September%202018+Version+B+CID_250d36654e64011424c76af2e32234e8&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Bullying%20endemic%20in%20councils%20Fair%20Work%20turns%20staff%20away)

### PAGE SEVEN - THE FUTURE:

<sup>6</sup> The McKell Institute (2016) Giving local governments the reboot: improving the financial sustainability of local governments.

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018) Government Finance Statistics, Australia, 2016-17 Catalogue No: 55120 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/5512.0>

<sup>8</sup> Australian Local Government Association (2015) National State of the Assets Report

### PAGE SEVEN - POPULATION

<sup>9</sup> Source: ABS Catalogue 3222.0 - Population Projections, Australia, 2012 (base) to 2101 (LATEST ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 26/11/2013 ) [http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/3222.0Main%20Features52012%20\(base\)%20to%202101?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3222.0&issue=2012%20\(base\)%20to%202101&num=&view=](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/3222.0Main%20Features52012%20(base)%20to%202101?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3222.0&issue=2012%20(base)%20to%202101&num=&view=) (downloaded 4 September 2018)





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