

Restore Financial Assistance Grants to 1%

The North Burnett Regional Council supports the ALGA and LGAQ's call for Financial Assistance Grants (FAG's) to be restored to at least one percent (1%) of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

The relative decline in core federal funding to local governments has reduced the capacity of councils to develop and maintain services and infrastructure in their communities. This fuels the risk of reducing standards of living in those communities and across the nation.

Additional investment is essential to maintain living standards of all Australians by fostering the equitable provision of local government services and infrastructure, which will in turn maintain local economic growth.

The following extract is Part 1, Section 3 of the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995:

Objects of the Act

- (1) This section explains the objects of the Parliament in enacting this Act.
- (2) The Parliament wishes to provide financial assistance to the States for the purposes of improving:
 - (a) the financial capacity of local governing bodies; and
 - (b) the capacity of local governing bodies to provide their residents with an equitable level of services; and
 - (c) the certainty of funding for local governing bodies; and
 - (d) the efficiency and effectiveness of local governing bodies; and
 - (e) the provision by local governing bodies of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



WHAT THIS SUPPORT WOULD MEAN TO THE COMMUNITY...

1. Employment and increased liveability

Reliable funding of this amount would allow Council to increase local employment, fund its road network (including bridges), and increase the liveability of the region by providing improved cultural, sporting and recreation facilities of an equitable standard. If the North Burnett could see this investment, the region would see further increase to the gross regional product (GRP) which, for the Wide Bay Burnett region sat at \$12.41 billion in 2018, a two percent (2%) increase from 2017.

2. What rate rise would be necessary to achieve the same outcome?

Council would need to increase general rates by more than 120% to generate an equivalent cash injection. In other words, without this funding, our assets and liveability will continue to deteriorate as a rate rise of that level is not sustainable.

3. We can plan longterm

An increase in FAGs to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue gives Council the certainty it needs to plan for the future, confident that it has the financial capacity to deliver major community projects.

With funding certainty, Council can engage with the community to plan the projects and programs that the community needs to be vibrant and prosperous. Thus allowing Council to concentrate on delivering projects essential in maintaining high living standards for our residents.

This funding would also help Council meet community expectations, some of which are outlined in Council's Economic Development and Innovation Strategy, thereby giving the community the best chance possible of meeting future market demands.

RETURN OF NDRRA FUNDING

Council needs to bring attention to the fact that the NDRRA arrangements for water and sewerage assets will not adequately address the issues that we face with multiple plants and limited connections in the wake of disaster.

Council seeks reinstatement of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) funding for water and sewerage assets damaged during flooding events. The North Burnett region has a long history of flooding and Council wants to ensure that there is adequate funding for possible future events as water and sewerage is an essential public service.

