

THE NATIONALS

for Regional Victoria

2020 CONFERENCE MOTIONS DETERMINATIONS

As considered by State Council 2020-21 on 24 October 2020 & 12 December 2020

AGRICULTURE

1. Agricultural Research (Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to:

- a) invest in specialist agricultural secondary colleges such as Yanco in NSW, and;
- b) to increase funding for agricultural research towards sustainability of food and fibre production.

Moved: Joanne Armstrong.

Seconded: Meree Bath.

CARRIED

The Victorian Nationals parliamentary wing will pursue the proposition to invest in specialist agriculture colleges such as Yanco in NSW through our policy processes for next year's state election.

An increase in funding for agriculture research to assist Victorian farmers to continue to meet consumer needs of producing food and fibre sustainably will be core to any Victorian National Parliamentary policy in the future. Tragically, the Andrews Labor Government has reduced the focus on agriculture in this state which is a position the state Nationals' team looks forward to reversing in government after November 2022.

2. Farm Invasion (Ripon AEDC, Mildura AEDC, Morwell AEDC)

That this conference strongly opposes the watering down of trespass laws by the Andrews Government and further calls for farm invasion to receive statutory minimum penalties for on farm trespass and theft once a threshold of physical or financial damage has been inflicted.

Amended Motion: That this conference strongly opposes the watering down of trespass laws by the Andrews Government and further calls for farm or livestock industry invasion to receive statutory minimum penalties for property trespass and theft once a threshold of physical or financial damage has been inflicted.

Moved: Carolynne Rankcom.

Seconded: Melina Bath.

CARRIED

The Nationals have been very active in promoting this issue in Parliament and in the media. Melina Bath successfully established an upper house inquiry in 2019 to put a spotlight on the challenges facing Victorian farmers as a consequence of weak trespass laws. The report made a number of key recommendations to protect farmers, including the introduction of on the spot fines. A year on, the Andrews Government still has not acted on this recommendation, a point which The Nationals continue to prosecute in Parliament and in the media.

3. Judicial Education (Morwell AEDC, Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to work with the judicial educational system to improve education and training for magistrates and judges about consequences and impacts of farm trespass and animal activism, particularly those undertaking circuit work in regional courts.

Moved: Carolynne Rankcom.

Seconded: Meree Bath.

CARRIED

The Nationals have worked to see this adopted as Coalition policy. This recommendation was included in the minority report produced by The Nationals and the Liberals to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee's inquiry into farm trespass.

4. Privacy Act Review (Corangamite FEDC)

That this conference calls on the state and federal governments to review Privacy Act 1988 and Information Privacy Act 2000 in respect of the rights of children under the age of 18 years of age living at home in the custody of their parents particularly affecting consensual family businesses such as farms.

WITHDRAWN

BUSHFIRE RESPONSE

5. Roadside Clearing (Euroa AEDC, Gippsland South AEDC, Gippsland East AEDC)

That this conference calls on the Andrews Labor Government to allow CFA volunteers and landholders to conduct planned burns along roadsides and railway lines and further calls for roads managed by Regional Roads Victoria to be cleared on each side to prevent fallen trees from blocking roads after bushfires.

Moved: John Buxton.

Seconded: Bruce Nicholls.

CARRIED

Tim Bull has urged the government to address roadside fuel loads on the Great Alpine road and called for more slashing of roadside grass. You can watch his speech to Parliament [here](#). He has also asked questions through the Parliament about roadside clearing permits and written an opinion piece about the need for the government to adopt a commonsense approach to roadside burning, which you can read [here](#).

6. Privately Owned, Sole Purpose Fire Fighting Vehicles (Ovens Valley AEDC)

That this conference supports exempting privately-owned sole purpose fire fighting vehicles over three tonnes from registration fees, not including Transport Accident Commission and stamp duty fees.

Amended Motion:

Moved: Simon Williamson.

Seconded: Emma Williamson.

CARRIED

Tim McCurdy raised this issue in Parliament with the Roads Minister. Road safety regulations currently allow a waiving of registration fees for primary producer registered

vehicles that are certified by the CFA to be suitably equipped for exclusively fighting fires. Stamp duty is still payable on vehicle transfers.

7. Fuel Reduction (Geelong AEDC, Gippsland South AEDC, Gippsland East AEDC, Lowan AEDC, Young Nationals)

That this conference:

- a) endorses the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission's recommendation for annual fuel reduction burning of a minimum of five per cent of public forest;
- b) calls on the Andrews Labor Government to immediately reverse its decision to abandon this policy;
- c) recommends a review of the decision by the Victorian Labor Government to prevent controlled grazing of cattle in the Victorian high country that assisted in reducing fuel loads in the past;
- d) recommends controlled logging of individual trees in state forests and nature reserves under state or local government control as part of sustainable management;
- e) condemns action by local government to erect or support native vegetation signs that prevent farmers and / or rural landholders from back burning or cutting grass alongside roadsides, and;
- f) supports subsidising rural landholders to purchase fire units to enable landowners to respond immediately to fires.

Amended Motion: That this conference:

- a) endorses the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission's recommendation for annual fuel reduction burning of a minimum of twenty per cent of public forest over four years;
- b) calls on the Andrews Labor Government to immediately reverse its decision to abandon this policy;
- c) recommends controlled logging of individual trees in state forests and nature reserves under state or local government control as part of sustainable management;
- d) condemns action by local government to erect or support native vegetation signs that prevent farmers and / or rural landholders from back burning or cutting grass alongside roadsides, and;
- e) supports subsidising rural landholders to purchase fire units to enable landowners to respond immediately to fires.

Moved: Adrian Harris.

Seconded: John Buxton.

CARRIED

Tim Bull has actively prosecuted the Andrews Government's failure to undertake an adequate prescribed burning program. In October last year the Victorian Auditor General released a report into Reducing Bushfire Risk which showed the government had not even reached half of an already low fuel reduction burn target. You can watch one of Tim's recent speeches to Parliament on the subject [here](#).

8. Building in Bushfire Zones (Young Nationals)

That this conference supports the right of property owners to build within rural and remote 'bushfire zones' and does not support any limitation of building within these areas or the compulsory buyback of any properties.

Moved: Joshua Wilhelm.

Seconded: Callum Moscript.

CARRIED

Bushfire overlays to guide where people can build and to keep communities safe during extreme bushfires were part of the Baillieu-Ryan Government's response to the 2009 Bushfire Royal Commission. As such it would be irresponsible to put lives at risk by reversing this policy.

EDUCATION

9. Careers Teachers (Morwell AEDC)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to increase the allocation of careers teachers in secondary schools to prepare students for a smoother transition into employment and further study.

Amended Motion: That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to increase the allocation of careers teachers in secondary schools to prepare students for a smoother transition into employment and further study.

Moved: Carolynne Rankcom.

Seconded: Meree Bath.

CARRIED

Steph Ryan has worked to implement this policy through the Legislative Assembly's Economy and Infrastructure Committee. The committee undertook an inquiry into sustainable employment for disadvantaged jobseekers which found that school career development was not meeting the needs of students. The committee heard that some careers teachers were responsible for 180 students and many were trying to juggle careers development with teaching core subjects. Consequently it recommended that career development be incorporated into the school curriculum from at least Year 7 and that school career practitioner's teaching loads be reduced so they can devote most, if not all, of their hours to career development and student counselling. The committee's final report can be read [here](#).

10. Rural Inspire (Young Nationals)

That this conference commends the Morrison-McCormack Government for their initial \$2 million investment in the youth-led Rural Inspire initiative and urges The Nationals to continue supporting this project beyond our current commitment to the next Federal Election.

Moved: Joshua Wilhelm.

Seconded: Danielle McCurdy.

CARRIED

This program is currently funded by the Federal Government.

ENERGY

11. Energy Supply (Gippsland South AEDC, Young Nationals)

That this conference:

- a) notes the importance of action to reduce Victoria's carbon dioxide emissions;
- b) notes that reckless Andrews Labor Government policies have resulted in Victoria going from having the most affordable electricity in the country to the least affordable in just five years;
- c) endorses policies that reduce emissions but ensure the continued provision of reliable and affordable energy supplies;
- d) supports continued investment in technologies to support a transition to alternative fuel sources; and
- e) supports further development of hydrogen from coal and/or gas with carbon capture and storage, and from renewable sources, as an alternative energy supply source and export opportunity.

Amended Motion: That this conference:

- b) notes that reckless Andrews Labor Government policies have resulted in Victoria going from having the most affordable electricity in the country to the least affordable in just five years;
- c) endorses policies that reduce emissions but ensure the continued provision of reliable and affordable energy supplies;
- d) supports continued investment in technologies to support a transition to lower greenhouse emissions; and
- e) supports further development of hydrogen from coal and/or gas with carbon capture and storage, and from renewable sources, as an alternative energy supply source and export opportunity.

Moved: Melina Bath.

Seconded: Callum Moscript.

CARRIED

The Nationals announced a policy in 2019 to support the proposed Waste-to-Energy project at Opal Australia's Maryvale Mill in the Latrobe Valley which would provide reliable, despatchable power, while reducing waste to landfill and emissions. We are currently developing further energy and emissions policies, including developing a position that would ensure that local communities benefit from the development of major energy facilities, especially wind farms, that can have otherwise negative impacts. Gippsland Nationals MPs have supported the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain (HESC) pilot project in the Latrobe Valley which produced its first hydrogen in March 2021. The Federal Nationals committed \$50 million towards this project.

12. Power Grid Upgrade (Ripon AEDC)

That this conference supports the upgrade and stability of the power grid in western Victoria to allow wind farms and solar farms to enter the grid.

Amended Motion: That this conference supports the upgrade and stability of the power grid across all of Victoria to allow wind farms and solar farms to enter the grid.

Moved: Chris Anderson.

Seconded: Hugh Delahunty.

CARRIED

13. Commercial Solar and Wind Royalties (Melbourne AEDC/FEDC)

That this conference calls on The Nationals to ensure all utility sized and commercial solar and wind farms start paying royalties to the state for the use of the sun/wind, with an exemption for non-profit, co-operatives and household renewable generators.

Amended Motion: That this conference calls on The Nationals to ensure all utility sized and commercial solar and wind farms start paying royalties to the state to access the distribution network, with an exemption for non-profit, co-operatives and household renewable generators.

Moved: Lachlan McKerrow.

Seconded: Helen Smith.

CARRIED

This motion is technically void in that the Victorian Government does not own the distribution network – in Victoria’s case it is privately owned and broken down into one transmission network and five separate distribution businesses. There is a detailed technical and regulatory framework already under the National Electricity Market that governs access to the network for generators, including wind and solar farms.

ENVIRONMENT

14. Native Timber Industry (Gippsland East AEDC, Morwell AEDC, Young Nationals)

That this conference condemns the Andrews Labor Government’s decision to close down the sustainable native timber industry which will mean the loss of thousands of harvest, haulage processing and value adding jobs in Victorian rural communities and calls on the government to overturn its decision.

Moved: Anna Tyben.

Seconded: Melina Bath.

CARRIED

The Nationals MPs continue to drive this issue. We have organised protests on the steps of Parliament and we have used Question Time to bring attention to the Andrews Government’s destructive decision to close Victoria’s sustainable native timber industry. MPs have engaged with mills and harvest and haulage contractors to tell their stories and advocate for their livelihoods. The Nationals have announced that we will reverse Labor’s decision to close the industry if we are elected to government in 2022.

15. Timber Plantations (Lowan AEDC)

That this conference calls for all policies regarding timber plantations for carbon capture and storage to allow for landholders to harvest the timber in the future to maximise the renewable carbon stored.

Moved: Hugh Delahunty.

Seconded: Lee Marchant.

CARRIED

Melina Bath has facilitated a range of forestry experts to appear before the current ecosystems inquiry to demonstrate the value of on-farm tree plantations for productivity, profitability and biodiversity. The inquiry is due to report to Parliament later this year.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

16. Supporting CFA Brigades (Murray Plains AEDC, Euroa AEDC)

That this conference calls for a review of how the CFA supports and manages its local brigades and further urges the Andrews Government to properly resource the CFA by replacing the old tanker fleet, purchasing better safety equipment for volunteers and installing security cameras at fire sheds.

Moved: Elaine Lees.

Seconded: Bruce Nicholls.

CARRIED

FEDERAL

17. Holden Car Brand (Corangamite FEDC)

That this conference expresses concern at the decision by General Motors (GM) to vacate the Australian motor vehicle manufacturing scene and calls upon the Federal Government to demand the rights to the "Holden" brand name from GM and restrict its use to a possible future electric or hybrid car to be manufactured in Australia.

Amended Motion: That this conference expresses concern at the decision by General Motors (GM) to vacate the Australian motor vehicle manufacturing scene and calls upon the Federal Government to demand the rights to the "Holden" brand name from GM and restrict its use to a possible future vehicle to be manufactured in Australia.

Moved: David Trott.

Seconded: Martin Svikis.

CARRIED

FEDS

18. Rebates for Dentistry (Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Federal Government to include dentistry services in the Medicare rebate system.

Moved: Emma Williamson.

Seconded: Rachael Littore.

CARRIED

FEDS

19. Homecare Packages (Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Federal Government to investigate the feasibility to increased funding for homecare packages in rural areas to address the disadvantage of distance to service providers.

Moved: Emma Williamson.
Seconded: Rachael Littore.

CARRIED

FEDS

20. Centralised Emergency Relief Fund (Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Federal Government to support the implementation of a centralised fund registered to administer emergency relief.

WITHDRAWN

21. Data Protection & Encryption Laws (Ballarat FEDC / Buninyong-Wendouree AEDC)

That this conference calls on the Federal Government to repeal the archaic data protection and data encryption laws which will enable ecommerce and digital free enterprise to thrive in the 21 st century.

Moved: Daniel Emmerson.
Seconded: Andrew Black.

CARRIED

FEDS

22. Currency (Restrictions on the Use of Cash) Bill 2019 (Melbourne AEDC/FEDC, Young Nationals, Euroa AEDC)

That this conference affirms the right of every Australian to financial freedom, and strongly opposes the Currency (Restrictions on the Use of Cash) Bill 2019 to preserve financial freedom and protect Australians from the threat of negative interest rates.

Moved: Lachlan McKerrow.
Seconded: Helen Smith.

CARRIED

FEDS

23. Religious Discrimination Bill (Ballarat FEDC / Buninyong-Wendouree AEDC)

That this conference reiterates its support for freedom of faith, conscience, and observance and calls on the Federal Government to provide robust protections for Australians of all faith backgrounds in the final draft of its proposed religious discrimination bill.

Moved: Andrew Black.
Seconded: Lee Marchant.

CARRIED

FEDS

24. ABC (Euroa AEDC)

That this conference calls on the Federal Government to protect the ABC from political attacks, guarantees adequate service to all regional areas of Australia and further supports

the reintroduction of short-wave radio to support our opportunities and influence in the Asia and Pacific regions.

Amended Motion: That this conference calls on the Federal Government to guarantee adequate broadcast service to all regional areas of Australia, and that the ABC adheres to its charter and further supports the reintroduction of short-wave radio to support our opportunities and influence in the Asia and Pacific regions.

Moved: Bruce Nicholls.
Seconded: Peter Walsh.

CARRIED

FEDS

25. Compulsory Home Insurance (Ovens Valley AEDC)

That this conference supports the introduction of compulsory home insurance.

Moved: Simon Williamson.
Seconded: Emma Williamson.

LOST

HEALTH

26. Access to Mental Health (Morwell AEDC)

That this conference calls on the Andrews Labor Government to provide dedicated inpatient mental health facilities, throughout regional Victoria, for children and adolescents.

Moved: Melina Bath.
Seconded: Anna Tyben.

CARRIED

Emma Kealy as the Shadow Minister for Mental Health continues to raise the need for additional mental health services, including beds, in regional Victoria. She has prosecuted this through the media and in Parliament. At the launch of the final report from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System at the Royal Exhibition Buildings earlier this year, she urged the government in front of the media and gathered stakeholders to give Victorians the mental health services they need and deserve.

27. Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing (Melbourne AEDC/FEDC)

This conference calls for the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Mental Health, be built in regional Victoria.

Moved: Lachlan McKerrow.
Seconded: Steph Ryan.

CARRIED

Nationals MPs continue to advocate for a much greater investment into mental health services in rural communities. We have highlighted the disparity that exists between city and country in investment and accessibility to mental health supports and services.

28. Drug Rehabilitation (Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to fund regional rehabilitation centres to assist those battling addiction.

Moved: Meree Bath.
Seconded: Emma Williamson.

CARRIED

Melina Bath has run a public campaign to press the government to fund a new rehabilitation centre in the Latrobe Valley. As a consequence of that effort, construction work is now underway on a 20-bed facility.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW

29. Local Government Review (Bendigo AEDC/FEDC)

That this conference calls for a thorough review into the roles, responsibilities and funding of local government, councillors and council chief executive officers.

Moved: Murray Buzza.
Seconded: John Buxton.

CARRIED

Concerns raised by The Nationals, among others, forced the Andrews Labor Government to undertake a review into Local Government rates which was released on 20 December 2020. However the Government has only accepted 36 out of 56 recommendations of the review and in our view, its terms of reference were not sufficiently broad enough. The Nationals are continuing to develop policy options on local government. As part of this, in 2020 we engaged a Parliamentary Intern to study alternative revenue options for local government.

LAW & ORDER

30. Protecting Public Transport Workers (Morwell AEDC, Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to legislate for tougher sentences to apply to those who assault public transport workers, such as bus drivers and train conductors.

Moved: Anna Tyben.
Seconded: Meree Bath.

CARRIED

The Victorian Nationals parliamentary wing will consider legislation to protect public transport workers in government.

31. Road Rage (Shepparton AEDC)

That this conference calls for any person found guilty of road rage or damage to property or person to have their licence cancelled for life.

WITHDRAWN

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT & DECENTRALISATION

32. Public Housing (Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to increase public housing stock in rural communities.

Moved: Jo Armstrong.

Seconded: Emma Williamson.

CARRIED

Nationals MPs have campaigned strongly for improvements to rural public housing stock and pressure applied by The Nationals has forced the Andrews Labor Government to announce a \$5.3 billion *Big Housing Build* to construct more than 12,000 new homes throughout metro and regional Victoria in the 20-21 Budget, with 25 per cent of funding to be allocated to regional Victoria.

You can see the Member for Gippsland South Danny O'Brien speaking in Parliament pressing the government on public housing in October 2020 [here](#). In February this year, Melina Bath called for public housing to be made a priority, highlighting the critical shortage that exists across Gippsland. Watch Melina's speech [here](#).

33. Regional Incentive Packages (Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the state and federal governments to create 'Regional Incentive Packages' to stimulate private investment in communications, energy, water and housing infrastructure in rural and regional Victoria.

Moved: Jo Armstrong.

Seconded: Emma Williamson.

CARRIED

The Baillieu-Ryan Government's Regional Growth Fund achieved this when The Nationals were in government between 2010 and 2014. The Andrews Government did not continue funding this program, however the state parliamentary team will give it careful consideration as part of a decentralisation policy ahead of the November 2022 state election.

TREASURY & FINANCE

34. Fire Services Property Levy (Lowan AEDC, Euroa AEDC)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to provide a transparent report as to the status of the fire services property levy to ensure public understanding of the finance necessary to fully fund the CFA and MFB fire services.

Moved: Greg McAdam.
Seconded: Steph Ryan.

CARRIED

Nationals MPs continue to demand that the Andrews Government details where it is spending the fire services property levy. Last year Steph Ryan asked the government for a full breakdown of the fund. Read more [here](#).

35. First Farm Stamp Duty Exemption (Young Nationals)

That this conference supports an increase in the maximum property value threshold for the young farmer's first farm stamp duty exemption from \$750,000 to \$2 million to better support young Victorians enter the agricultural sector.

Moved: Callum Moscript.
Seconded: Joshua Wilhelm.

CARRIED

36. Payroll Tax Reductions (Young Nationals)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to provide additional support to small businesses in fire-affected areas through temporary payroll tax reductions for rural small businesses.

Moved: Joshua Wilhelm.
Seconded: Lee Marchant.

CARRIED

The Nationals pushed strongly for additional support for small businesses impacted by bushfires and COVID. Tim Bull sought a dedicated bushfire recovery fund for economic recovery. You can watch his speech to Parliament [here](#). The Nationals have also promised to reduce payroll tax if elected to government in 2022.

TRANSPORT & ROADS

37. Murray Basin Rail Project (Ripon AEDC, Women's Executive)

That this conference condemns the Andrews Labor Government for botching the Murray Basin rail project and calls on them to complete it, in full and without delay.

Moved: Anita Rank.
Seconded: Meree Bath.

CARRIED

The Andrews Government and Transport Infrastructure Minister Jacinta Allen have totally botched the Murray Basin Rail Project. The Federal Nationals, through Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack, committed an additional \$195 million to fix up the mess the Andrews Government made of the project, however Ms Allan has made it clear that once that money is spent she will abandon the project, saying it is an issue for a future government to deal with. A once in a generation opportunity to upgrade and standardise rail

freight in West and North West Victoria has been lost because of Labor's poor government oversight.

The State Nationals have led the charge in prosecuting this case in the media and in Parliament.

38. V/Line Network (Ballarat FEDC / Buningyong-Wendouree AEDC, Young Nationals)

That this conference calls on the state and federal governments to prioritise works to improve V/Line services to link regional Victoria to Melbourne, including construction of dedicated V/Line links to Southern Cross and the duplication and electrification of intercity passenger rail lines.

Moved: Andrew Black.

Seconded: Mark McOwan.

CARRIED

The Nationals have spoken out against the Andrews Government's plan to dud key regional rail lines by failing to build dedicated tracks as part of airport rail. This will see regional trains stuck behind metropolitan trains and will cruel the opportunity for dedicated regional lines for decades to come. Infrastructure improvements are actively being considered ahead of the November 2022 election.

39. V/Line Standard Gauge Conversion (Euroa AEDC)

That this conference calls for the northeast rail corridors from Wallan to Tocumwal/Deniliquin and Albury to be converted to standard gauge by 2030 to ensure the expansion of Melbourne's metro network does not increase travel times for regional commuters beyond their current duration.

Moved: Steph Ryan.

Seconded: Chris Anderson.

CARRIED

The Nationals continue to prosecute the failings of V/Line services around the state. Steph Ryan spoke with Channel Nine earlier this year to highlight long travel times and cancelled services. Infrastructure improvements will be considered as part of The Nationals' 2022 policy platform.

40. Western Highway Duplication (Ripon AEDC)

That this conference calls on the Andrew Labor Government to complete the duplication of the Western Highway to Stawell which was to be completed by 2016.

Moved: Chris Anderson.

Seconded: Jo Armstrong.

CARRIED

Funding for planning to bypass Ararat was included in this year's budget, however under the Andrews Government the project has stalled. In August 2019 Peter Walsh pressured the Premier in Question Time about when construction on the duplication between Buangor and Ararat would start. The Premier said he was unable to provide a start date for the project.

41. Road Usage Charges (Indi FEDC)

That this conference calls for an examination of the fairness of road usage charges across all road users with a special focus on bike users.

Moved: Simon Williamson.

Seconded: Emma Williamson.

LOST

42. Motor Vehicle Registration (Shepparton AEDC)

That this conference calls for motor vehicles to have at least basic third-party property liability insurance in place before they can renew registration or obtain a permit.

Amended Motion: That this conference calls for motor vehicles to have at least basic third-party property liability insurance in place before they can renew motor vehicle registration or obtain a permit.

Moved: Peter Shields.

Seconded: Lindsay Dann.

CARRIED

Tim McCurdy has written to the Roads Minister to put The Nationals' position on motor vehicle registration, however a response from the government has not yet been received.

43. Sustainable Bus Networks (Morwell AEDC, Women's Executive)

That this conference calls on the Victorian Government to transition the state's bus network from being dependent on fossil fuels to renewable energy sources over a 20 year period and includes current technology, such as hybrid technology which offers greater environmental benefit and emits less harmful particulates, into current ceiling prices on buses.

Moved: Anna Tyben.

Seconded: Meree Bath.

CARRIED

Steph Ryan as the Shadow Minister for Regional Public Transport has consulted with the Bus Industry Association about moving the state's bus network to renewable energy sources. This will be considered by The Nationals' state parliamentary wing as part of policy development for the 2022 election.

44. Roads of Strategic Importance (Gippsland East AEDC)

That this conference calls for the inclusion of the Princes Highway, The Great Alpine Road and the Snowy Monaro Highway in the 'Roads of Strategic Importance Initiative' (ROSI).

Moved: John Buxton.

Seconded: Lee Marchant.

CARRIED

WATER

45. Lake Buffalo (Ovens Valley AEDC, Indi FEDC, Young Nationals, Euroa AEDC)

That this conference supports the referral of Stage 2 of Lake Buffalo to the National Water Grid Authority for a complete feasibility study to support the environment, community and irrigators, and calls on the Andrews Government to follow the lead of the NSW Government by committing to building new dams to drought proof Victoria's future.

Moved: Steph Ryan.

Seconded: Simon Williamson.

CARRIED

Tim McCurdy and Steph Ryan have urged the Andrews Government to submit a request for feasibility funding to the Federal Government. This month Steph wrote to the acting Minister for Water Richard Wynne to invite him to visit Big Buffalo to see why The Nationals believe the proposal warrants investigation. To date Tim has had three responses from the Andrews Government, all of which indicate they are unwilling to take the proposal forward for evaluation by the Commonwealth. Danny O'Brien has also grilled the Water Minister through Public Accounts and Estimates Committee over her failure to respond to the Deputy Prime Minister's request that Victoria submit a proposal for funding.

46. Lake Hume (Indi FEDC)

That this conference calls for an investigation into damming Lake Hume at the narrows to provide permanent water at Tallangatta as promised when the dam was enlarged.

WITHDRAWN

47. Lock Zero (Murray Plains AEDC)

That this conference supports the building of Lock Zero at Wellington or the Government to request the National Water Grid prepare the business case by June 2021.

Moved: Elaine Lees.

Seconded: Peter Walsh.

CARRIED

Steph Ryan, as the Victorian Shadow Water Minister, has asked the Victorian Water Minister to refer the development of a business case for the building of Lock Zero at Wellington to the National Water Grid for funding.

48. Water Trading (Lowan AEDC, Ripon AEDC)

That this conference calls for an investigation into the perceived mismanagement of water within the Murray Darling Basin and supports the development of a water trading platform to provide greater transparency and accountability in the water market.

Moved: Steph Ryan.

Seconded: Chris Anderson.

CARRIED

The Federal Nationals appointed the ACCC to conduct an inquiry into markets for tradeable water rights in the Murray-Darling Basin. The final report, handed down in March this year, recommended the development of a new water trading platform and the establishment of a new Water Markets Agency to regulate trading. The Federal Government is currently considering its response to the ACCC's reports, however Victorian Nationals MPs have urged the Federal Water Minister to establish this platform, in line with this motion. The guide to the ACCC's final report can be read [here](#).

49. Irrigation (Gippsland South AEDC)

That this conference encourages the development of additional irrigation opportunities in Gippsland, including through the utilisation of allocated but unused water entitlements in the Latrobe system, and the expansion of high value horticulture to encourage the growth of industry and jobs in the region.

Amended Motion: That this conference encourages the development of additional irrigation opportunities in Gippsland and the expansion of high value horticulture to encourage the growth of industry and jobs in the region.

Moved: Steph Ryan.

Seconded: Chris Anderson.

CARRIED

Member for Gippsland South Danny O'Brien has campaigned on the opportunities to expand irrigation in Gippsland, pushing it through the media and in Parliament. This campaign had its first success when the State Government allocated \$500,000 for a second feasibility study for the expansion of irrigation in Central Gippsland in June 2020. This study is expected to be released in the second quarter of 2021. Shadow Water Minister Steph Ryan and the Member for Eastern Region Melina Bath have also been briefed by the project's proponents.

50. Latrobe River (Gippsland FEDC)

That this conference calls supports the use of Latrobe River water for agricultural production and the placing of a moratorium on filling coal mines with surface water.

Amended Motion: That this conference supports the use of Latrobe River water for agricultural production and the placing of a moratorium on filling coal mines with additional irrigation water or environmental flows.

Moved: Anna Tyben.

Seconded: Lee Marchant.

CARRIED

Lobbying by The Nationals, including by Gippsland MPs, has secured a commitment from the Labor Government and Water Minister Lisa Neville that irrigators entitlements will not be affected by any plans to create pit lakes to rehabilitate Latrobe Valley coal mines. Opposition Leader Michael O'Brien gave similar support to irrigators and the environment during a visit to the region in January 2020. Indeed it was lobbying by The Nationals, irrigators and the community that forced the Government in June 2020 to consider both alternatives to pit lakes, and if pit lakes are to proceed, alternative water sources. This remains an ongoing discussion with no final solution yet agreed by the Government.

51. Catchment Management Authorities (Bendigo AEDC/FEDC)

That this conference calls for a review into the roles of the catchment management authorities.

Moved: Murray Buzza.

Seconded: Peter Walsh.

CARRIED

The Nationals state parliamentary wing will consider this motion in government.

PARTY MATTERS

52. Legislative Council Voting Period (Geelong FEDC)

That this conference supports the adoption of a voting system for the Legislative Council like that recently adopted for the Senate, to ensure that voters are clear about how their preferences are allocated.

Moved: Peter McLoughlin.

Seconded: Anita Rank.

CARRIED
