

# DLGSC

Local  
Government  
Portfolio

Our  
**VISION**  
is to create a

The local government portfolio area contributes to this vision by supporting and enabling a robust local government sector to achieve positive outcomes for communities in Western Australia.

**VIBRANT**

**INCLUSIVE**

**&  
CONNECTED**

**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIAN  
COMMUNITY**

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**1** Deliver a streamlined and contemporary Legislative framework by reforming the *Local Government Act* and other relevant legislation.

**2** Develop the supporting environment and provide local governments with the tools to build a transparent, robust, and innovative sector.

**3** Deliver on our current commitments of existing projects and programs of reform.

### SHORT TERM

- 1.1 Finalise agreement on the Local Government reform package.
- 1.2 Finalise reforms and implementation of the new legislation for a centralised system of registration (Dog and Cat breeders).
- 1.3 Introduce legislation to ensure the appropriate regulation and recognition of park homes in Western Australia.
- 1.4 Introduce a contemporary legislative framework based on the recommendations from the review the *Local Government Act*.
- 1.5 Standardise and streamline local government policies, laws, and procedures; and develop model laws to support local governments.
- 1.6 Introduce contemporary legislative framework for cemeteries and cremations in Western Australia.

### LONG TERM

- 2.1 Develop and rollout relevant and useful online material to assist the local government sector.
- 2.2 Introduce a risk based approach to inform where support within the local government sector is needed.
- 2.3 Develop an 'early intervention' model of support for local governments.
- 2.4 Develop a scalable financial reporting framework and introduce model financial statements.
- 2.5 Support local governments to introduce livestreaming of council meetings across all councils.
- 2.6 Encourage and support excellence and innovation through the Better Practice Reviews (BPR).
- 2.7 Develop and implement a strategy to work with peak bodies to support and retain good councillors.
- 2.8 Work with sector stakeholders to introduce one standardised benchmarking framework for local governments. Review and improve how this is reported through MyCouncil.
- 2.9 Develop an education and capacity building framework for local governments.
- 2.10 Revise approach and simplification of Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR).

- 3.1 Finalise the Partners in Government Agreement and support implementation of agreed outcomes.
- 3.2 Deliver election commitments, and implement recommendations from OAG and authorised inquiries.
- 3.3 Implement changes to local government legislation and policy under the second tranche of planning reform.
- 3.4 Establish a centralised system for dog and cat registrations.
- 3.5 Implement Off Road Vehicle legislation and reforms.
- 3.6 Deliver a short stay accommodation database for Western Australia.

## ENABLERS TO ACHIEVE PRIORITIES

- Develop an engagement plan for working in partnership with the local government sector.
- Build internal capability and capacity to work in different ways and support the sector.
- Actively engage and work in partnership with other areas of DLGSC to identify new opportunities.
- Deliver high quality reporting for the local government sector.
- Leverage data to track and monitor progress within the sector.

## FOUNDATIONS OF CORE BUSINESS

Develop policy and legislation; and process statutory applications.

Provide advice and guidance to the local government sector.

Address public enquires and complaints; investigate and support investigations.

Partner with stakeholders to deliver grants, programs and election commitments.

Ensure compliance with local government legislation.

Provide executive support to WA Local Government Grants Commission and Advisory Board.





# Local Government Reform

## Stronger local democracy and community engagement

Election and community engagement reforms are proposed to empower ratepayers to participate in local democracy and decision-making.



### Direct Election of the Mayor or President

All electors in large local governments will be able to vote directly for the Mayor or President, giving ratepayers more power to choose the leadership of their council. This reflects a broader trend, with councils such as Stirling and Rockingham already having moved to a public vote for the election of their Mayors.



### Preferential Voting

Local government elected members will be elected by preferential voting, which is the same as State and Federal elections. Preferential voting ensures the elected council best reflects community views.



### Consistent Number of Elected Members

To increase consistency, the number of elected members on any council will be set based upon the population within that local government. The Local Government Panel Report recommended a number of elected members as follows:

- population of up to 5,000 – 5 councillors (including the President)
- population of between 5,000 and 75,000 – 5 to 9 councillors (including the Mayor/President)
- population of above 75,000 – 9 to 15 councillors (including the Mayor)



### No Wards for Small Local Governments

Wards in small local governments can cover very limited areas, with small populations. This means that councillors are more likely to be elected unopposed, or with a very small number of votes. In line with a broader trend, it is proposed that wards for all small local governments be abolished.



### Reforms to Ensure Valid Candidate and Voter Eligibility

Rules for who is eligible to vote or run for council will be tightened, ensuring that only legitimate residents or businesses will be eligible. New laws will prevent candidates from using sham leases in council elections. The basis for why a candidate is eligible to run will also be required to be publicly disclosed.



### Community Engagement Charter

Local governments will be required to establish a Charter which sets out how it will engage with ratepayers and the community about the local government's proposed policies, initiatives, and projects. A model Charter will be published to assist local governments who wish to adopt a standard Charter.



### Other Amendments

There are also more reforms proposed to further enhance local government democracy and community engagement, including proposed minor changes to the annual meeting.



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## **Feedback**

To provide your feedback on these reforms, please email your comments to [actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au) by 4 February 2022.