



Hon David Templeman MLA
Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture & the Arts

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TO ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

CIRCULAR N^o 04-2018

With the end of the year rapidly approaching, it is timely to reflect on a busy 2018 and what promises to be an equally busy 2019.

In 2018, the McGowan Government continued to deliver on its commitment to forge a stronger relationship with local government. I am proud of the partnership that is being achieved through the State and Local Government Partnership Agreement.

We are delivering on an ambitious legislative reform program that will empower local government. Our vision is for local governments to be agile, smart and inclusive.

In June 2018, amendments were made to the *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996* and the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*. These changes simplified audit and financial reporting for local government as part of the transition of audit oversight to the Auditor General.

More recently, the McGowan Government passed legislation to expand the powers of the Minister to suspend or dismiss an individual council member. This change has long been sought by the sector and allows the Minister to take decisive action required to enable a council to get back to business without punishing the other members of council.

In August 2018, I announced a series of priority reforms to the *Local Government Act 1995*. These reforms include the introduction of universal training for council members and candidates, a single code of conduct that will apply to council members and candidates, a streamlined and sensible approach to gifts, and modernised public notice requirements that reflect contemporary technology and ways of communication.

I look forward to introducing a bill to Parliament in early 2019 to give effect to these important amendments.

In September 2018, I announced plans for a new Local Government Act. The new Local Government Act will transform local government in Western Australia. To start a conversation with the community and local government, discussion papers that addressed topics such as elections, financial management, rates, council meetings and community engagement were released.

To date, more than 80 workshops have been held with the community, local government staff and stakeholders across Western Australia. In addition, workshops delivered in partnership with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) have been held in each of WALGA's seventeen zones.

This engagement has been a significant undertaking and I would like to thank all local government council members who participated and acknowledge the support of host local governments.

The feedback collected from these sessions reflects the diverse opinions on the future of local government in Western Australia and the many possible directions to deliver local democracy and better services to the community.

As 2019 approaches, your council may be planning to adopt a formal resolution as a submission to the review or a submission as input through your WALGA zone.

At the same time, I also wish to highlight the opportunity for individual council members to have their say via submissions to the review.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to transform local government. As leaders of your council, I encourage you to share this opportunity with your council and broader community.

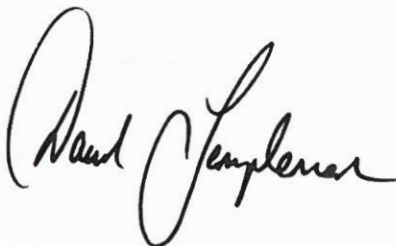
While more than 700 submissions have been received to date, fewer than 100 submissions have been received from council members. Given the range of different viewpoints expressed in the workshops, I wish to reiterate that members of your council have an opportunity to express their own views, as well as reach a consensus opinion on the new Act.

You can have your say via surveys available at www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/lgareview. Alternatively, submissions can be lodged via email at actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au.

Confidential and anonymous submissions are welcome.

In closing, I wish to thank you for your contribution to local government in 2018 and wish you a safe and happy festive season.

Yours sincerely



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