



Local Government Act Review

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Agile, smart, inclusive – Local Governments for the future

For the first time in more than 20 years, the *Local Government Act 1995* is being reviewed to modernise the outdated laws and reduce red tape.

Background

Phase one – modernising local government

Phase two – delivering for communities

What you need to know

What is the Local Government Act review?

The Local Government Act review will introduce changes that will modernise the Act and ensure that local governments are positioned to deliver for the community into the future. The review will be undertaken in two phases with the first consultation paper to be released in September 2017.

Why is the Local Government Act Review required?

A review of the Act is overdue. The Western Australian community deserves local governments that are agile, smart and inclusive. Some parts of the Act restrict the ability of local governments to deliver for the community. Other parts have not kept pace with modern technology and community expectations.

What matters will be considered in each of the two phases?

The focus of phase 1 is modernising local government. This will include:

- Electronic availability of information.
- Meeting public expectations for accountability, including gift disclosures.
- Meeting community expectations of standards, ethics and performance.
- Building capacity through reducing red tape.

The focus of phase 2 is positioning local government to deliver for the community. This will include:

- Increasing participation and public confidence in local government elections.
- Increasing community participation in local government decision-making.

- Improving financial management, including through local government enterprises.
- Building capacity through reducing red tape.

Why is the review being conducted in two phases?

Some aspects of the Act are clearly outdated and need to be prioritised. It is important that progress is made as soon as possible. Other matters are more complicated and require more detailed consideration of the options available. Conducting the review in two phases will ensure that priority areas are addressed as quickly as possible.

Will the review examine local government boundaries?

No, the McGowan Government opposes any structural reforms that force local governments to amalgamate.

How will the review be funded?

The costs of the review will be conducted with fiscal responsibility in mind and will be funded within the local government portfolio.

How will the community and local government be engaged?

The community will be invited to actively participate in a number of ways. There will be opportunities to get involved online as well as in more traditional ways. A consultation paper planned for release later this year will ask for community views on proposals as well as seek suggestions for other improvements that could be made to the Act.

Workshops will also be conducted across the State to enable the views of the community to be heard.

Opportunities will be presented through the consultation paper and workshops and individual local governments are encouraged to get involved.

Will the consultation paper provide the answers?

No, the intention is that the paper will identify issues and outline a number of options that could address each issue. Local governments, members of the community, businesses and any other interested person or organisation will be asked to comment on the options.

What is the landscape of Western Australia's local government?

Western Australia has 137 local governments. The Western Australian third tier of government is the most diverse of any Australian State or Territory. Not only does Western Australia have the most local governments, it has Australia's largest local government by area (East Pilbara), the smallest by area (Peppermint Grove), smallest by population (Sandstone) and the nation's thirteenth largest local government by population (Stirling).

Collectively, local governments in Western Australia have an annual revenue of almost \$4 billion and manage assets worth in excess of \$40 billion. In 2015-16, Western Australian local governments levied more than \$2 billion in rates, an amount that exceeded the State's total share of Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue.

Want to know more?

Resources