

Metropolitan Local Government Review Recommendations

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[Government's response to the Metropolitan
Local Government Review
Recommendations \(DOCX 30KB\)](#)

In June 2011 the Government appointed the independent Metropolitan Local Government Review Panel to examine the social, economic and environmental challenges facing Perth in the next 50 years. The Panel's final report contained 30 recommendations for changes to Perth's local government arrangements. The Government's response to the recommendations is outlined below.

	RECOMMENDATION	STATE GOVERNMENT POSITION
1	<i>The State Government give consideration to the inequities that exist in local government rating, including rate-equivalent payments and State Agreement Acts.</i> The Robson Report raises a number of issues under this recommendation, including:	
	• Rate exemptions for charitable organisations	The basis for rate exemptions for charitable purposes will be considered in a further stage of reform.
	• The appropriateness of using the Unimproved Valuation rating method in the metropolitan area	Not supported. There is no demonstrable relationship between using either the GRV or UV valuation methods and the ongoing financial sustainability of local governments. Moving to GRV across the metropolitan area may disadvantage those using their land for rural purposes.
	• Matters relating to the Cambridge Endowment Lands Act	There is no demonstrable relationship between the Cambridge Endowment Act valuation issue and the ongoing sustainability of the Cambridge local government.
	• The exemption provided by State Agreement Acts and the payment of local government rates	Supported. Issues concerning State Agreements have already been addressed.

	• Whether Local Government rate Equivalent payments paid by State trading enterprises to the State Government should go to local governments	Not supported. There is a long-standing agreement that governments do not tax each other. This means that local governments do not pay State payroll tax and other taxes. A broader review of rating and taxing arrangements between the State and local governments would be needed if this recommendation were to be supported.
2	<i>A collaborative process between State and local government be commenced to establish a new Partnership Agreement which will progress strategic issues and key result areas for both State Government and local government.</i>	Supported. The State Government is committed to renewing the partnership agreement between the State Government and the local government sector.
3	<i>The State Government facilitate improved co-ordination between State Government agencies in the metropolitan area, including between State Government agencies and local government.</i>	Supported. The State Government will work with WALGA and the new local governments to clearly define respective roles and responsibilities to support better co-ordination. This will be done as part of a further stage of reform.
4	<i>A full review of State and local government functions be undertaken by the proposed Local Government Commission as a second stage in the reform process.</i>	Partly supported. The State Government will work with WALGA to clearly define respective roles and responsibilities to support better co-ordination. This will be done as part of a further stage of reform. A separate local government commission will not be established as it duplicates the role of the Department of Local Government and Communities and the Local Government Advisory Board.
5	<i>In conjunction with the proposed structural and governance reforms, that local government planning approval powers be reinstated in metropolitan Perth by the State Government.</i>	Not supported at present. Development Assessment Panels are working well.
6	<i>The State Government consider the management of waste treatment and disposal at a metropolitan-wide scale either be undertaken by a State authority or through a partnership with local government.</i>	Supported. The State Government will await the recommendations of the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Planning Working Group, which includes local government and industry representation, before considering options for metropolitan waste treatment and disposal.
7	<i>A shared vision for the future of Perth be developed by the State Government, in conjunction with local government, stakeholder and community groups.</i>	Supported. To be progressed once the new local governments are in place.
8	<i>A Forum of Mayors be formed to facilitate regional collaboration and effective lobbying for the needs of the metropolitan area and to provide a voice for Perth.</i>	Supported. Membership will also include the Directors General of Premier and Cabinet, Transport, Planning, and Local Government and Communities to ensure an appropriate strategic focus.

		To be progressed once the new local governments are in place.
9	<i>The Forum of Mayors be chaired by the Lord Mayor of the modified City of Perth in the first instance</i>	Not supported. The chair of the Forum of Mayors should be determined by the members of the Forum. Secretariat support for the Forum will be provided by the Department of Local Government and Communities.
10	<i>The newly created local governments should make the development and support of best practice community engagement a priority, including consideration of place management approaches and participatory governance modes, recognition of new and emerging social media channels and the use of open-government platforms.</i>	Supported.
11	<i>The existing Regional Local Governments in the metropolitan area be dissolved, their provisions in the Local Government Act 1995 be repealed for the metropolitan area and a transitional plan for dissolving the existing bodies in the metropolitan area be developed.</i>	Deferred. Regional Councils are primarily concerned with the treatment and disposal of waste. The recommendation of the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Planning Group will be considered when it has concluded its work later this year.
12	<i>The State Government give consideration to transferring oversight responsibility for developments at Perth's airports, major hospitals and universities to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority.</i>	Existing mechanisms are available to resolve planning matters associated with critical developments. These include Planning Control Areas; Improvement Plans and Schemes and Clause 32 of the <i>Metropolitan Region Scheme</i>. These mechanisms are considered sufficient. The proposed changes to local government boundaries that bring institutions within a single local government will alleviate some of the planning problems currently being experienced.
13	<i>Periodic local government boundary reviews are undertaken by an independent body every 15 years to ensure the city's local government structure continues to be optimal as the metropolitan region develops.</i>	Supported. Further analysis will consider how and how often such reviews should be undertaken.
14	<i>The Local Government Advisory Board be dissolved and its operating and process provisions in the Local Government Act 1995 be rescinded, with the Local Government Commission taking over its roles, including consideration of representation reviews.</i>	Partly supported. The Local Government Advisory Board performs an important role in providing expert advice to the Minister for Local Government. A review of its current role will be undertaken to ensure it has the capacity to pursue improvements to the local government sector that meet changing community needs.
15	<i>A new structure of local government in metropolitan Perth be created through specific legislation which:</i> <i>a) incorporates all of the Swan and Canning Rivers within applicable local government</i>	Partly supported. The State Government is committed to achieving substantial reform to the metropolitan local government sector during this term of Government.

	areas b) transfers Rottnest Island to the proposed local government centred around the City of Fremantle c) reduces the number of local governments in metropolitan Perth to 12, with boundaries as detailed in Section 5 of this report.	As a result, the State Government will work with the sector to deliver a model of 14 local governments in this term of government. Recommendation 15 a) and b) are supported. The reduction in the number of local governments proposed in Recommendation 15 c) is supported, with 14 local governments to be created to more appropriately reflect communities of interest and the improved financial sustainability of those local governments.
16	Consideration be given to all local government elections being conducted by the Western Australian Electoral Commission.	Local governments should continue to choose who conducts an election to best meet the needs of the community.
17	Compulsory voting for local government elections be enacted.	Not supported.
18	All Mayors and Presidents be directly elected by the community.	Not supported. Local governments should continue to choose the method for electing the Mayor or President that best meets the needs of the community.
19	Party and group nominations for local government electoral vacancies be permitted	Not supported. Party and group nominations should not be encouraged at a local government level.
20	Elected members be limited to serving three consecutive terms as councillor and two consecutive terms as Mayor/President.	Not supported. Councillors should continue to serve for as long as the community elects that councillor.
21	Elected members be provided with appropriate training to encourage strategic leadership and board-like behaviour.	Supported. The Government is investigating opportunities to link the payment of additional allowances to the completion of appropriate training that enhances councillor skills.
22	A full review of the current legislation be conducted to address the issue of the property franchise and the most appropriate voting system (noting the Panel considers that first-past-the-post is inappropriate for the larger districts that it has recommended).	Not supported. Residents and land owners will continue to have the right to vote in Council elections. No change to the election method will be introduced.
23	Implementation of the proposed setting of fees and allowances for elected members as set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.	Supported. This recommendation has already been progressed with changes to legislation being passed in 2012.
24	Payments made to elected members be reported to the community on a regular basis by each local government.	Supported. Public reporting of payments to individual councillors will be required through changes being progressed by the Department of Local Government and Communities.

