



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT REVIEW ►► DELIVERING FOR THE COMMUNITY

A new Local Government Act for Western Australia: **inclusive**

In 2017 the State Government announced a review of the Local Government Act 1995 — the first significant review since the Act was introduced more than two decades ago.

Between September 2018 and March 2019, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries held consultation sessions in every region, issued surveys on potential reforms, and invited written submissions.



More than 3,000 survey responses and written submissions were received from community members, ratepayer associations, industry groups, local governments, councillors, and peak bodies.



More than 100 organisations and community groups were consulted including local government staff, peak bodies, multicultural groups, young people, Aboriginal groups and seniors.

What we heard

Inclusive topics focused on how local governments represent and recognise the diversity of their communities. Community will always remain at the heart of local government, and local governments should be supported to identify opportunities for their community members to engage, inform or participate in local decision-making.

Key opportunities which emerged in the feedback include:

Elections

Elections are a fundamental part of local democracy and provide a direct voice for the community on the issues which are most important to them. We looked at opportunities which could increase participation at elections, and there was support for trialling electronic and online voting.



The State Government has introduced requirements for candidate induction which assisted candidates to understand the role of a councillor and their responsibilities around campaigning at the 2019 local government elections.

Community engagement

A new Local Government Act will need a strong foundation in community engagement and participation, which will support local government to understand, and respond to, their communities' needs.

There was support for the introduction of community engagement charters which could assist local governments to identify the ways the diverse groups in the community want to engage with their council.



Local governments across WA are showcasing great ways of getting their communities involved such as place-based engagement, participatory budgeting, citizen juries and reaching more people through social media.

Dealing with complaints

Local governments provide a wide range of services and may make difficult decisions which are unpopular with some community members or businesses.

Local governments already have processes in place to handle community concerns, however, there is currently no legislative requirement for local governments to have a formal complaint handling process.



Further work will be undertaken to look at options which could support good customer service and improve transparency about how complaints are dealt with at the local level.

Where to now

The Minister for Local Government has announced the formation of an independent panel to progress the development of a new Local Government Act for Western Australia. The panel will be chaired by Mr David Michael MLA, Member for Balcatta.

The **Local Government Review Panel** will consider and recommend high-level direction and guiding principles for the development of a new Local Government Act.

Feedback received during the review of the Local Government Act 1995 will form an invaluable part of the panel's deliberations.

For further information, visit DLGSC's website, www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/lgareview