



## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR THE FUTURE >>>

### INFORMATION SHEET

# Public notice policy position

The consultation paper for phase one of the Western Australian Local Government Act Review addressed a number of key areas required for reform, including the availability of information to the public and local government disclosure requirements. The consultation process included a four month public submission period and workshops in 15 locations across the State.

This information sheet outlines what we heard during the consultation period about disclosure and availability of information and the new policy direction the Government intends to take based on this information.

## Why we consulted

It is vital that local governments take steps to provide information to their communities. This ensures:

- local governments operate in a transparent manner
- residents are sufficiently engaged in community affairs
- the community recognises the work and service that local governments provide.

## What we consulted on

The consultation paper considered all situations where a public notice was required under the Local Government Act, with feedback sought on:

- whether the notice is necessary
- how wide the distribution should be (state-wide and district-wide)
- whether it should be provided electronically and if so, in what format
- whether a print notice is still required.

Additionally, the consultation paper considered the current requirements placed upon local governments to have certain documents and registers available for public inspection, with feedback sought on:

- whether the information is necessary
- how it should be provided
- whether more information should be provided.

.....

**78%** non-local governments would like council meetings to be live streamed

.....

.....

**62%** of local governments would like rating information made available

.....







.....

**92%** of non-local governments would like a detailed breakdown of council member allowances









.....

## What we heard

### Public notice

-  Concerns about moving purely online
-  Community newsletters are a good source of communication
-  General support for an opt-in email notification system
-  Local governments should have autonomy to decide the best method
-  Newspapers are an outdated and insufficient way of communicating
-  Central repository of information via online portal

### Publicly available information

-  All information currently required to be disclosed should be online
-  Websites are already well used by some local governments
-  Removal of some disclosure requirements
-  Significant support for live streaming but concerns about cost and potential defamation
-  Concerns about moving purely online
-  Community support for local governments to make all information publicly available
-  More detailed minutes of meetings - transcribed or Hansard produced
-  Widespread support to remove the requirement to disclose the CEOs employment contract

 **There was universal support for all documents contained within a meeting agenda to be included in the minutes of the meeting.**

## What you want to see

A summary of feedback on what other information should be publicly available is detailed in the table below.

	Live Streaming of council meetings	Diversity data	Attendance council meeting	Attendance at other activities on behalf of the council	Complaints against the local government	Performance review of CEO	Rating information	District Maps (including Ward boundaries)	Adverse findings of the Standards Panel and other State government agencies	Detailed breakdown of allowances
Local Government (%)	7	23	57	21	21	7	62	57	50	35
Non-local Government (%)	78	70	92	70	84	62	100	100	92	92

## New direction

### Public notice

Notices are currently required to be published either locally or State-wide depending upon the likely location of those affected or with significant interest. This requirement will be retained.

Flexibility for any new public notice requirements will allow old and new technologies to be used depending on the local conditions, intended audience and nature of the information provided.

#### A local public notice will require:



a) publication of a notice on the local government's official website

b) provision of the information via at least three of the following mediums:



on a State Government website



on social media



electronic mail distribution list



published in a newsletter or newsletters available to the majority of residents throughout the district



exhibited on a notice board at every local government office and library within the district



publication of a notice in a newspaper circulating generally throughout the district (if available)

The State-wide public notice provisions will require local governments to select appropriate mediums that provide coverage to their intended audiences and will result in outcomes that are in the best interests of the community.

As centralised websites become available, such as for the advertising of tenders or job vacancies, these could replace the need for publication in a State-wide newspaper.

### Publicly available information

Local governments are currently required to make a significant amount of information available to the community at their offices during office hours. This information will now be required to also be made available on the local government's website.

CEO and senior officer employment contracts will no longer be available but local governments will need to report on the website and in their Annual Report the total benefit package of the CEO.



## The following additional information will also be available:



district map with  
ward boundaries



consolidated copy of  
each local law



adverse findings of the Standards Panel, Corruption and Crime Commission and  
State Administrative Tribunal relating to council members of that local government



all documents contained within a meeting  
agenda (which are not confidential) will be  
included in the minutes of the meeting



all approved policy documents  
that govern the assessment of an  
application by the local government

## Included within a local government's annual report will be new requirements for:



diversity  
data



council member  
attendance at council and  
committee meetings



all fees and allowances paid  
to each council member by  
the local government



the total benefits  
package of the  
CEO

To encourage local governments to live stream meetings, statutory protection will be provided for the local government from defamation for publishing the comments of council members and officers. This protection will not extend to the people making the comments.

## Vision for the future

These amendments will ensure greater availability and access to information by members of the community and set a minimum standard for the provision of information by local governments.

They also provide greater flexibility for local governments in determining the best ways to communicate with their communities.

### Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Gordon Stephenson House, 140 William Street, Perth WA 6000

GPO Box R1250, Perth WA 6844

Telephone: (08) 6551 8700 Fax: (08) 6552 1555

Freecall (Country only): 1800 620 511

Email: [actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au) Website: [www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au](http://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au)

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) – Telephone: 13 14 50

LG089-0711



Local  
Government  
Act Review