

## Submission to Local Government Act Review

Mundaring in Transition are a local branch of an International movement to encourage resilient and sustainable communities. ([www.transitionnetwork.org](http://www.transitionnetwork.org))

We would like to suggest a change to Section 6.38 of the Act regarding Service Charges and more specifically with Financial Management Regulation 54.

This would be to allow local governments in WA to replicate community solar energy initiatives that have been very successful in Victoria and replicated, from the originating City of Darebin, to over 20 councils in that state (<https://solarsavers.org.au/>). This provides solar systems to low income homeowners, enabling them to access financial savings on their electricity bills, with the system being paid off through the council rates system over 10 years.

Such projects are precluded in WA due to the restrictions of the regulation detailed below.

### *LOCAL GOVERNMENT (FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT) REGULATIONS 1996 - REG 54*

54 . *Works etc. prescribed for service charges on land (Act s. 6.38(1))*

*For the purposes of section 6.38(1), the following are prescribed as works, services and facilities —*

- (a) property surveillance and security;*
- (b) television and radio rebroadcasting;*
- (c) underground electricity;*
- (d) water.*

We suggest that this regulation be modified to include

e) photovoltaic systems

Or even in the interests of future changes in technology and community expectations that this regulation be freed up to allow councils themselves to determine what 'works, services and facilities' may benefit their local communities, with this list of prescribed services forming a set of examples rather than a definitive list. The new act is expected to become more smart, agile and inclusive.

The change suggested would allow individual councils to be smarter in encouraging and supporting socially responsible behaviour. It is becoming more and more urgent to address climate concerns and move to 100% renewable energy. Local government have the ability to encourage significant improvements in this area. The success of the Victorian local governments in this area over the last few years has been impressive and has resulted in many MW of solar being installed by people who would otherwise not have been able to afford it.

This regulation change would give local government in WA the flexibility to consider more creative ways to achieve the community values which they profess to uphold. Many local governments in WA are now adopting carbon emission reduction targets and the Solar Savers model is a low cost way to achieve emission reductions. Allowing local government the flexibility to pursue such initiatives could pave the way for more such innovative programs.

It is unfortunate that the WA Local Government Act precludes communities from accessing innovative initiatives such as that detailed above that have been successful and popular in other parts of Australia. We are hopeful that the current review will remedy this situation.

Yours Sincerely

Jim Thom  
On behalf of Mundaring in Transition  
0488 091 436

14<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018

[Redacted signature]

Web [www.mt.org.au](http://www.mt.org.au)

