



21 February 2022

Local Government Reform Review
Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries (DLGSC)
PO Box 8349
Perth Business Centre WA 6849

Dear LG Reform Officers,

On behalf of our Friends group I wish to submit the following recommendations in relation to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' Local Government Reform proposal.

We agree with the majority of outlined reforms as they will hopefully lead to Councillors, the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer being empowered to perform their duties with greater clarity and transparency as well as engage more honestly with the community. Our comments on the reforms as outlined are as follows:

- 1.6 Vexatious Complaints Referral: one particular item that often appears as a vexatious complaint is an insistence by a homeowner/s that a particular tree or a number of trees be removed from the verge. When it does not occur the tree/s may then be poisoned or removed illegally. If this occurs, the Inspectorate should have the power to apply penalties to homeowners who take such action.
- 2.1 Resource sharing: it's not only a CEO that could be shared. Some larger councils have innovative technology packages that would benefit smaller councils and improve outcomes for all West Australian citizens. So this reform should be broad in its scope to ensure it captures as many opportunities as possible.
- 2.2 Artificial lawns and concrete on verges will do nothing for the environment apart from increase the heat island effect. There should be a compulsory standard for verges that councils enforce that disqualifies artificial lawns, concrete, bricks or pavers.
- 2.3 We agree with this reform as long as it does not result in a negative effect on the environment or health of our communities, such as loss of trees or green space.
- 4.3 We believe that this reform could be extended to include compulsory voting as well. Compulsory voting is popular with Australians and it would increase people's interest in local government elections and the role of local government in our lives.
- 5.1 It is unfortunate that climate change mitigation and the environment have been ignored in these reforms, particularly when it is local governments which are often required in the first instance to find solutions to disasters, threats and tragedies. We therefore believe that Environmental Management should also be included as a

new principle in the Act. If included it would then open up the opportunities for a significant improvement in the health and well being of residents. When the natural environment is respected and well managed it leads to improved outcomes overall.

Another area which has not been addressed in these reforms is diversity. Unfortunately we were unable to find any data detailing the number of male Chief Executive officers compared to female Chief Executive Officers or the ratio of males to females who constitute the Executive Staff/Team. Management of our local governments do not reflect the wider population so it's obvious that the appointment process is failing as well as the processes by which executive staff are promoted. As with the natural environment, until all forms of diversity in local government are addressed then our local governments will fail to meet the standards and expectations that their residents expect.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Stubbs', written in a cursive style.

Leonie Stubbs
Coordinator

