

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGY

To progress reform and improve sustainability in the Local Government sector, the Minister for Local Government is establishing a Steering Committee and four Working Groups.

This document outlines the roles, deliverables and membership of each of these groups.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair

DG DLGRD

Membership

DLGRD, WALGA, LGMA, DPI, DTF, Regional Development Commissions (RDC) and CCIWA, and Cr Helen Dullard, Mayor Ron Yuryevich, Tim Shanahan and Minister's Chief of Staff.

Key Objectives:

- By August 2009 all local governments have made an informed decision on voluntary amalgamation.
- By August 2009 all local governments have decided the number of councillors required within a range of 6 to 9.
- To ensure that local identity and community representation is maintained under a new governance model.
- Local governments are to explore membership of appropriate regional groupings.
- By September 2009 initial proposals for legislation changes made by the Legislative Reform Working Group are considered and final recommendations made to the Minister.
- By December 2009 final proposals for amending legislation are completed.

Tasks to be completed by Steering Committee:

- Ensure that the above objectives are facilitated.
- Develop an appropriate model and guidelines to assist local government in developing proposals for voluntary amalgamations.
- Develop guidelines to assist local governments to reduce the number of elected members.
- Identify resources and assistance required by local governments to explore and enter into regional service delivery and governance arrangements.
- Undertake an assessment of shared services and regional governance models in WA and other States.
- Identify options for community representation including consideration of community-based committees with delegated authority from the governing council.
- Consider legislation proposals made by the Working Groups and make recommendations to the Minister.
- Consider the reports from the Working Groups and make recommendations on these to the Minister.

Reporting

Quarterly reporting to the Minister on progress made and issues identified, with a final report in December 2009.

1. CORPORATE AND STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKING GROUP

Chair

LGMA

Membership

DLGRD, WALGA, LGMA, DPI, DTF, RDC, UWA Asset Management specialist.

Key Objectives:

- By June 2009 any proposals for amending legislation are developed.
- By the end of 2009 a sustainability checklist is completed by all local governments.
- By end of 2009, guidelines are developed to assist with enhanced strategic and financial planning and asset management.
- By January 2010, each local government to have adopted a strategic planning framework, including asset and financial management and a workforce plan.
- By June 2010, each regional grouping of councils to have adopted a strategic planning framework, including asset and financial management and a workforce plan.

Tasks to be completed by the Working Group:

- Facilitate the achievement of the above objectives.
- Provide detailed advice on the implementation of improved and consistent local government strategic planning.
- After consideration of the strategic planning role of the RDCs, develop options for the coordination of local government and RDCs activities in this area.
- Develop local government borrowing guidelines which would include, among other things, requirements to undertake risk assessments and cost benefit analysis.
- Establish a process for assessing local government's own source revenue effort as an integral part of the examination of Actions in this area.

Reporting

Quarterly reporting to the Steering Committee on progress made and issues identified, with a final report in November 2009.

2. COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Chair

DPI

Membership

DLGRD, WALGA, LGMA, DPI, DTF, CCIWA, Urban Development Institute of Australia, Housing Industry Association.

Key Objectives:

- By June 2009, proposals for amending legislation are developed as appropriate.
- By June 2010, relevant Local Governments to have adopted Community Infrastructure Plans.

Tasks to be completed by the Working Group:

- Facilitate the achievement of the above objectives.
- Investigate the ability of councils to form corporate entities to undertake urban regeneration projects and other business activities.
- Develop measures to enhance flexibility for the raising of revenue through rates, fees and charges.
- Explore measures to inform and improve local governments' statutory planning and development approvals process.
- Prepare detailed proposals for amending legislation.
- Liaise with industry and the sector to identify ways of having reasonable engineering conditions placed on subdivisions, reducing timelines for town planning approvals and building license approvals across the local government sector.
- Develop a model Community Infrastructure Plan by August 2009 for adoption by local governments.

Reporting

Quarterly reporting to the Steering Committee on progress made and issues identified, with a final report in November 2009.

3. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING WORKING GROUP

Chair

WALGA

Membership

DLGRD, WALGA, LGMA, Minister's Women's Advisory Group, Edith Cowan University Local Government academic.

Key Objectives:

- By June 2009 detailed proposals for amending the Act are developed.
- By June 2009 the appropriateness of an Industry Training Council and Industry Training Fund is to be determined.
- By September 2009 a range of providers and appropriate training modules are identified.

Tasks to be completed by the Working Group:

- Facilitate the achievement of the above objectives.
- Develop measures to enhance the skills and competency of elected members.
- Recommend measures to encourage a diverse range of citizens to stand for council.
- Provide advice on skills development of local government staff and measures for attracting and retaining staff.
- Investigate the establishment of an Industry Training Council and Industry Training Fund, including through liaison with the DET Reference Group, AICD, AIM, CCIWA and relevant training providers.

Reporting

Quarterly reporting to the Steering Committee on progress made and issues identified, with a final report in November 2009.

4. LEGISLATIVE REFORM WORKING GROUP

Chair

DLGRD

Membership

DLGRD, WALGA, LGMA,

Key Objectives:

- That by the end of 2009, a review of the relevant provisions of the Act to have been completed and any proposals for amendment to have been developed.

Tasks to be completed by the Working Group:

- Examine compliance and reporting requirements in the *Local Government Act 1995* with consideration of categorisation of local governments.
- Examine general competency powers in the Act.
- Examine purchasing provisions.
- Prepare detailed proposals for amending the Act for referral to the Steering Committee by June 2009.
- By July 2009 consider legislation proposals made by other Working Groups on referral from the Steering Committee.
- By September 2009 or earlier, develop detailed proposals for possible amendments to the legislation.

Reporting

Quarterly reporting to the Steering Committee on progress made and issues identified, with a final report in November 2009.