



## **Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests**

Our Ref: M0901084

TO ALL MAYORS AND PRESIDENTS

CIRCULAR N<sup>o</sup> 01-2009

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGIES**

Today, at the combined Local Government ward meeting in Exmouth, I announced the Liberal-National Government package of Local Government reform strategies. These strategies are aimed at achieving greater capacity for Local Governments to better plan, manage and deliver services to their communities with a focus on social, environmental and economic sustainability.

The principal strategies in the package focus on voluntary structural reform of local government that, if adopted, will completely transform the sector. Specifically, these strategies encourage local governments to take steps over the next six months to voluntarily amalgamate and form larger local governments, to reduce the total number of elected members to between six and nine, and for local governments to form appropriate regional groupings of councils to assist with the efficient delivery of services.

I formally invite each of the 139 councils within Western Australia to embrace this opportunity to voluntarily amalgamate and to voluntarily reduce the total number of elected members for each council. I look forward to receiving advice on your council's clear intention on these matters within a period of six months from the date of this announcement.

Other key strategies of the State Government's reform package include:

- Adoption by local governments of a longer term strategic planning framework, including asset and financial management and workforce planning;
- Development of measures to enhance the skills and competency of elected members and staff;
- Examination of options to maintain local community identity and greater community representation including consideration of community-based committees;
- Identification of proposals to amend the local government legislation to facilitate local government sustainability;
- Examination of the ability for local governments to form corporate entities to undertake urban regeneration projects and other business activities;
- Identification and implementation of approaches to reduce town planning and building licence approvals time; and

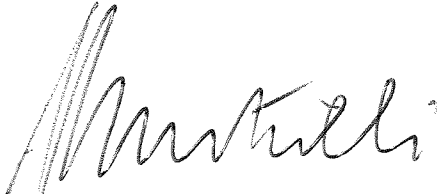
- Development of measures to encourage a diverse range of citizens to stand for council.

Many of these directly relate to the actions outlined in the WA Local Government Association's Local Government Sustainability report, *The Journey: Sustainability into the Future – Shaping the Future of Local Government in Western Australia*, released in 2008.

To oversee and assist local governments with implementation of the strategies, I am establishing a Local Government Reform Steering Committee with State Government, local government and private sector representation, including from the two elected members of the Local Government Advisory Board. Four working groups will report to the Steering Committee on a regular basis.

The Steering Committee, through the Department of Local Government and Regional Development, will contact all local governments to advise you of the work program for the implementation of the strategies and to provide further guidance. Details of the reform strategies will soon be available on the Department's website [www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au](http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au) and will also be forwarded to you by the Department. I expect the Steering Committee to complete its work and report to me by December 2009.

I look forward to working in partnership with the sector to deliver these significant reforms to local government, thus ensuring Western Australia has a dynamic and sustainable local government sector that can deliver high quality and effective services to communities into the future.



**Hon G M (John) Castrilli MLA**  
**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT; HERITAGE;**  
**CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS**

5 February 2009