

Local Government Bill 2019

Theme 1 – Improved services

The Local Government Bill 2019 will improve local government democracy, accountability and service delivery for all Victorians.



Better local government for all Victorians

The Local Government Bill 2019 is the most ambitious reform of local government in Victoria for 30 years.

It will deliver on the Victorian Government's commitment to modernise how local government works in our state through reforms in **five key areas**:

- Allow councils to **improve the services** they deliver for communities through better financial management and engagement with the community;
- Provide **stronger local democracy** with direct accountability to the community;
- Improve **councillor conduct** with clear standards of behaviour and stronger mechanisms to address poor conduct;
- Give the **community confidence** by making reforms to election processes and candidate requirements; and
- Provide a **new relationship** between State and local government and the community

Improving services

The Bill helps councils deliver improved services through more rigorous planning and engagement.

Clear service standards

Councils will plan and deliver services in accordance with a set of service performance principles based on fairness, accessibility, quality, cost and continuous improvement.

The service performance principles need to be considered by Council in the performance of all of its roles.

This will cover all aspects of council services, from parks and libraries to recycling, waste disposal and local laws.

Why change?

Councils deliver more than \$8 billion in vital services for their communities annually but there is currently no clear framework for how they are delivered.

Stronger voice for the community

Communities will be put at the centre of local decisions.

Previously it was optional for Council to develop their Plan and Budget with the local community. Additionally there were no requirements for long term plans or a clear Community Vision.

Now councils will be expected to fully engage with the community. As part of this, they will need to develop a comprehensive engagement plan and work with the community to develop a:

- Long-term vision
- Four-year Council Plan
- Four-year Budget
- 10-year Financial Plan
- 10-year Asset Plan

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Why change?

Victorians will be actively involved in setting the agenda for their council with genuine and meaningful engagement on important decisions. Communities can be clear about what outcomes the council will deliver and how it will achieve them.

More accountable Mayors

Mayors will take on an expanded role, leading council and reporting back annually to the community on progress against the Council Plan.

Why change?

Mayors are the public face of their council. This change will enable them to be more effective and meaningful in the role, supporting visible and accountable leadership for their communities.

Councils working together

Councils will have more freedom to innovate and work with other councils, government agencies, community organisations and the private sector.

This is balanced with new requirements to be more transparent and accountable to the community.

Why change?

The current Act restricts council's ability to solve problems by working with other councils, even though shared solutions are often the most efficient and sustainable option.

By removing those restrictions each council will be free to collaborate and deliver new and improved services for their communities.

Smaller councils will find it less costly to comply with core governance principles and be able to seek more opportunities to reduce costs.



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