

40TH PARLIAMENT



Interim Report

SELECT COMMITTEE INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Inquiry into Local Government

Presented by
Hon Simon O'Brien MLC (Chairman)
October 2019

Select Committee into Local Government

Members as at the time of this inquiry:

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC (Chairman)

Hon Diane Evers MLC

Hon Charles Smith MLC

Hon Laurie Graham MLC (Deputy Chairman)

Hon Martin Aldridge MLC

Staff as at the time of this inquiry:

David Carroll (Advisory Officer)

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1 Select Committee into Local Government

Interim Report

- 1.1 On 26 June 2019 the Legislative Council established the Select Committee into Local Government (Committee) to inquire into how well the system of local government is functioning in Western Australia. The Committee's reporting date is 26 June 2020.
- 1.2 The Committee's terms of reference are as follows:
- The select committee is to inquire into how well the system of local government is functioning in Western Australia, with particular reference to —
- (a) whether the *Local Government Act 1995* and related legislation is generally suitable in its scope, construction and application;
 - (b) the scope of activities of local governments;
 - (c) the role of the department of state administering the *Local Government Act 1995* and related legislation;
 - (d) the role of elected members and chief executive officers/employees and whether these are clearly defined, delineated, understood and accepted;
 - (e) the funding and financial management of local governments; and
 - (f) any other related matters the select committee identifies as worthy of examination and report.¹

Submissions received by the Committee

- 1.3 On 4 July 2019 the Committee called for written submissions by 23 August 2019. Following representations from the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and other stakeholders the Committee extended the deadline for submissions to 13 September 2019.
- 1.4 The Committee received a significant response to its call for submissions; 276 submissions have been received and are being considered by the Committee.
- 1.5 The Committee will publish a number of the submissions and make them available on the Committee's website shortly.
- 1.6 The submissions provide a range of perspectives both from within and outside of local government, and canvass a wide range of issues. Some submissions explicitly address the Committee's terms of reference and discuss broad issues regarding the system of local government in Western Australia. Other submissions express strong views about individual local governments, or provide detailed information about specific issues or challenges relating to local government. The Committee will examine a range of systemic issues raised in submissions. The Committee thanks all submitters for their time and effort in providing information to the inquiry.
- 1.7 The Committee notes that its role is to inquire into its terms of reference and report its findings and recommendations to Parliament. It is not the Committee's role to adjudicate on

¹ Hon Simon O'Brien MLC, Western Australia, Legislative Council, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, 26 June 2019, pp 4616-17.

particular disputes either within a local government or between a local government and its residents.

Committee hearings

- 1.8 The Committee has conducted preliminary private briefings with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, WALGA, and the Office of the Auditor General.
- 1.9 The Committee intends to hold further hearings in both metropolitan and regional locations over the course of the inquiry.
- 1.10 The Committee will hold its first public hearing in Perth on 21 October 2019 with members of the Local Government Standards Panel.
- 1.11 Further hearings will be announced in due course.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Simon O'Brien".

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC
Chairman

Select Committee into Local Government

Date first appointed:

26 June 2019

Terms of Reference:

- (1) That a Select Committee into Local Government is established
- (2) The Select Committee is to inquire into how well the system of Local Government is functioning in Western Australia, with particular reference to -
 - (a) whether the Local Government Act 1995 and related legislation is generally suitable in scope, construction and application;
 - (b) the scope of activities of Local Governments;
 - (c) the role of the Department of State administering the Local Government Act 1995 and related legislation;
 - (d) the role of Elected Members and Chief Executive Officers/employees and whether these are clearly defined, delineated, understood and accepted;
 - (e) the funding and financial management of Local Governments; and
 - (f) any other related matters the Select Committee identifies as worthy of examination and Report.
- (3) The Select Committee shall comprise five Members.
- (4) The Select Committee shall report by no later than 12 months after the motion for its establishment is agreed to and may, if it sees fit, provide interim reports to the House.



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