

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT — REVIEW**

*Statement by Minister for Local Government*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Local Government)** [12.08 pm]: I would like to acknowledge the North Dandalup Primary School students from the member for Murray–Wellington’s electorate, who are visiting us today in Parliament.

It is my pleasure to advise the house of a significant milestone associated with the Local Government Act 1995 review. On 1 August 2018, I announced a suite of changes that will modernise the act and empower local governments to deliver for all Western Australians.

The reforms have been designed through extensive engagement with local government, and tackle key areas where the sector has been calling for change. I would like to acknowledge the good faith participation of the WA Local Government Association and Local Government Professionals Australia WA in the review, and their support for the review to date. The announced reforms will help local governments meet ever-increasing community expectations by building council member capacity and strengthening governance, transparency and accountability. We have listened to diverse views about the future of local government and heard from communities large and small. Local governments make a big difference across the state. In designing these reforms, we have been mindful of the variations between Western Australian local governments that result from the need to serve their unique communities.

Key reforms include to gifts. There will be a simplified and clearer gift framework that will prohibit council members and chief executive officers from receiving gifts that are intended to influence decision-making or that present a perceived conflict of interest. Universal training: there will be a three-pronged approach to assisting council members to perform their challenging role through induction for candidates and universal training of council members, as well as a requirement for councils to support professional development. Under the approach, all council members will complete training within 12 months of their election. Behaviour and standards: a mandatory code of conduct for all council members and candidates will be introduced. CEO recruitment, selection, performance review and termination: there will be minimum standards for local government CEO recruitment, selection, performance review and termination. Access to information: there will be improved access to council information, allowing new technologies to be used. Drafting of an amendment bill will now commence, and I look forward to introducing the bill to the house shortly.

Local governments make a tremendous contribution to Western Australia, and this requires a contemporary legislative framework that fits with their changing role and community expectations. I am pleased that the McGowan government is delivering on its commitment to deliver a modern Local Government Act, in partnership with the local government sector and in line with community expectations.