

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — REGULATION AND SUPPORT

534. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Has the department clearly defined its Local Government regulation and support objectives, deliverables and targets, and if not, why not?
- (2) If Yes to (1):
  - (a) How has the department done this;
  - (b) What are the defined regulations;
  - (c) What are the support objectives;
  - (d) What are the deliverables; and
  - (e) What are the targets?

**Mr J.N. Carey replied:**

- (1)–(2) The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) has clearly defined its local government regulation and support objectives, deliverables and targets in the Local Government Portfolio Plan on a Page (Local Government Plan) that was developed in consultation with sector stakeholders and launched to the sector in November 2021. The Plan is publicly available on the DLGSC website at: <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/department/publications/publication/local-government-portfolio>

The Local Government Plan sets the direction of the DLGSC in the short, medium and long term. It outlines three strategic priorities, which are supported by 22 actions. The strategic priority objectives are:

Deliver a streamlined and contemporary legislative framework by reforming the *Local Government Act 1995* and other relevant legislation.

Develop the supporting environment and provide local governments with the tools to build a transparent, robust and innovative sector.

Deliver on current commitments of existing projects and programs of reform.

The 22 actions range across policy areas, and some actions will sequentially follow others. For instance, future changes to the reporting framework established through the MyCouncil website will not occur until work to improve financial reporting under the State Government's local government reform package is completed and operational.

In accordance with its support objectives, the DLGSC has increased in-person visits to local councils, with the aim of providing advice, building capability and strengthening networks between DLGSC and the sector.

DLGSC has also led the introduction of combined agency briefings, in which senior representatives from the Corruption and Crime Commission, Office of the Auditor General, Public Sector Commission, State Records Office and the department provide presentations to councils on important conduct and integrity matters. These briefings provided a unique opportunity for State agencies to deliver information, advice and support to council members.

It is important that DLGSC is able to prioritise regulation and support activities according to the specific context of risks and emergent issues within the local government sector. However, certain functions administered or supported by DLGSC – such as the Local Government Standards Panel – may have discrete objectives, targets, or metrics which are reported in annual reports.

While DLGSC has been focusing its current and short-term regulation and support functions, the McGowan Government's proposed package of local government reforms will significantly transform the system of local government support and oversight in Western Australia.

The establishment of the proposed Local Government Inspector, and the range of associated early intervention tools and mechanisms, will restructure the oversight and enforcement of the *Local Government Act 1995* and its regulations.