

FACT SHEET

Local Government Amendment (Targeted Reform) Bill 2026

The Local Government Amendment (Targeted Reform) Bill 2026 (the Bill) amends the *Local Government Act 1993* to modernise the legislative framework governing Tasmanian councils. The Bill delivers targeted reforms to improve local representation, elevate standards of conduct, and enhance the strategic capability and transparency of the local government sector.

Key Components of the Bill

Reform Area 1: Councillor Numbers and Allowances

The Bill establishes a new, data-driven methodology to determine levels of local representation and councillor remuneration, ensuring they reflect community needs and the complexity of modern council roles. The methodology –

- Assigns councils to a representation category of (either 9 or 7 councillors) using a scoring system based on factors like population, infrastructure, development activity, and geographic size. Some councils will be given the option of voluntarily reducing to five elected members where they wish to do so.
- Establishes six allowance categories, with councils' allocation to those categories being determined using the same scoring system.
- Ensures consistent representation for similar councils and reduces the total number of councillors by 50 to 213 state-wide.
- Utilises savings from fewer councillors to fund a cost-neutral minimum 14.25% per cent increase to all allowance bands
- Creates in legislation a new transparent model for regular reviews of councillor numbers and allowances every four years, based on the routine application of the new and improved scoring methodology.

Reform Area 2: Integrity and Accountability

- Serious Councillor Misconduct – Establishes a new, independent pathway to address serious and severe breaches of the local government Code of Conduct. The Director of Local Government will act as the gateway to investigate and refer matters to the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT). TASCAT will be empowered with a full spectrum of enhanced sanctions, including suspension and dismissal, and/or disqualification of a councillor from office for up to seven years.
- Temporary Advisors – Introduces a new power for the Minister to appoint Temporary Advisors to councils exhibiting emerging governance issues. Advisors will be empowered to enter premises, request information, and recommend improvements.

- Performance Improvement Directions (PIDs) – Broadens the scope of PIDs, allowing the Minister to issue a direction in relation to any statutory breach, reinforcing their use as an early-intervention tool.
- Elected member Learning and Development – Requires councillors to complete mandatory training within their first 12 months in office. Councils are also required to adopt continuing professional development policies for councillors.

Reform Area 3: Strategic Capability and Transparency

- Local Government Role and Charter – Incorporates a new, contemporary role statement for councils centred on community wellbeing. It also establishes a legislative head of power to create a Local Government Charter via Ministerial Order to support the operationalisation of that role.
- Strategic Planning – Modernises the current statutory framework, requiring councils to explicitly link their 10-year strategic plans to community wellbeing outcomes. The Bill also mandates the adoption of dedicated community engagement strategies and workforce development plans.
- Data Collection and Consistency – Empowers the Minister to issue binding instructions regarding performance indicators and data reporting methodologies to ensure state-wide consistency and comparability.
- Rates Transparency – Empowers the Minister to prescribe additional information requirements for rates notices to help ratepayers better understand how and why their rates have changed.
- Internal Audit Functions – Mandates that all councils establish and maintain an internal audit function, bringing the sector into line with State Government standards.

Miscellaneous Amendments

The Bill also includes targeted amendments to resolve practical operational issues with the current Act:

- Alternative Voting Methods – Introduces a new framework to facilitate alternative methods of voting in certain situations and for certain types of individuals, including voters with a print disability.
- Remote Meetings – Facilitates remote attendance at council meetings by ensuring confidentiality. The Bill requires councillors attending closed sessions remotely to prevent unauthorised persons from viewing or overhearing proceedings and prescribes penalties for failing to do so.

- Code of Conduct Framework – Makes administrative changes to improve the efficiency of the Code of Conduct framework, including clarifying confidentiality requirements.