

Consideration of Other Key Issues Raised

Many issues and areas for change were raised during consultation, for consideration in developing potential reforms. In reviewing these area and issues, seeking advice, and being informed by research, it was determined that some areas and current provisions would be retained in their current form. These areas and the rationale for their retention is provided below.

<p>Mandatory Councillor Training</p>	<p>The option to introduce mandatory training was considered however it is not proposed to mandate councillor training at this point. Mandatory training is not supported by the local government sector. However, the directions include proposed mandatory candidate training and the requirement for councillors to report professional development against set core competencies. The Minister will also retain the option to issue a Performance Improvement Direction to specific councils or councillors, where it is needed.</p> <p>The exception to not implementing mandatory training for councillors, is that mandatory training for councillors in their role as a Planning Authority will be required.</p>
<p>Maximum Councillor terms</p>	<p>Limiting councillor terms was considered undemocratic and inconsistent with other levels of government and local government in other jurisdictions. The councillor turnover rate at the 2018 elections was around 40 per cent, indicating at a broad level that a reasonable balance between councillor renewal and stability is being achieved, without the need to set maximum terms.</p>
<p>General Manager Performance and Contracts</p>	<p>Requiring an independent provider to aid councils in the recruitment, performance management and contract management of general managers was considered. It was determined that there were alternative methods to achieve greater consistency, remove conflicts of interest, and have these processes professionally and objectively managed, without mandatorily imposing the cost of an independent provider on councils on a regular basis. Many councils voluntarily use the services of independent providers to manage general manager recruitment, performance management and contract management, but the cost for a number of smaller councils is often too significant to regularly use these services.</p> <p>The Minister will retain the power to specify the principle and processes governing the selection of general managers and the monitoring of their performance by the council.</p>
<p>Electronic attendance at council meetings</p>	<p>It was considered and determined that the status quo would remain. In-person attendance is required at other levels of government when making publicly open decisions (in parliaments) and there is no compelling argument to support it in local government. Leave of absences are available for councillors who cannot attend meetings.</p>
<p>Compulsory Voting</p>	<p>While there was a good level of support for compulsory voting, it was not enough to demonstrate that the majority of the community support this approach. Tasmania's local government elections already attract a high voter turn-out compared with other jurisdictions and therefore the potential marginal increase in votes that compulsory voting may achieve is not considered enough to justify the increase in the cost burden placed on the community.</p>
<p>Clarity between role of the general manager and the council, especially the mayor</p>	<p>A significant amount of work was undertaken on this issue during the Targeted Review of the Act and amendments were made in 2017. The Act is very specific about the functions of mayors, deputy mayors, councillors and general managers. The Act provides for the Minister to clarify the functions of mayor by order, as the Minister considers appropriate. In addition, the Minister, by order, may clarify the functions of general managers by specifying matters, or classes of matters, that are operational or administrative in nature and so are to be performed by general managers. These orders would apply to all councils.</p> <p>Effective working relationships require professionals to work collaboratively together, and this is the principle that should guide the working relationship between the general manager and the elected members. No further changes are proposed given this context.</p>