

Our ref: CTS 04163/26

Mr Lew Rojahn  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council

Email: [ceo@hopevale.qld.gov.au](mailto:ceo@hopevale.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Rojahn

I am pleased to advise that the *Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026* (the Bill) was passed through Parliament on 5 March 2026 and is now awaiting Royal Assent.

The Bill delivers on the Queensland Government's legislative reform agenda to strengthen local government by reducing unnecessary regulatory burden and ensuring councils have the clarity, authority and flexibility required to serve their communities effectively.

The Bill includes key amendments to the *Local Government Act 2009*, the *City of Brisbane Act 2010*, the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*, the *Right to Information Act 2009* and associated regulations. The amendments are designed to:

- empower mayors to be the official spokesperson of their councils
- streamline council operations by removing unnecessary red tape and regulations
- improve transparency through simplified councillor conflicts of interest and register of interest's framework
- refocus the councillor conduct framework to better address serious misconduct and remove the process for councillors sitting in judgement of their peers
- provide certainty by clarifying remuneration, leaves of absence, and vacancies of office and eligibility for elected members
- protect the privacy and safety of election participants by removing the requirement to publicly disclose residential addresses.

Further information about the provisions in the Bill is available in the enclosed factsheet.

It should be noted that most of the Bill's provisions commenced on Assent, however, amendments to the following provisions will commence at a later date by proclamation:

- conflicts of interest
- register of interests
- removal of conduct breaches from the councillor conduct framework.

Technical amendments to superannuation arrangements for local government employees will commence on 1 July 2026, aligning local government legislation with relevant Australian Government changes effective from that date.

I recognise that these reforms will require considered adjustments to council policies, procedures and governance practices. Please be assured that the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (the department) is committed to working with you to support a smooth and practical transition.

To further support implementation, the department will be delivering a series of webinars designed to build understanding of the reforms across the sector. I would encourage you to participate in the Council Chief Executive Officers webinar being on Wednesday 18 March 2026. My office will send Teams invitations for the following webinars shortly:

**Empowering Councils Bill (Mayors and Councillors)**

Date: Monday 16 March 2026

Time: 4:00 – 4:45PM

**Empowering Councils Bill (Council CEOs)**

Date: Wednesday 18 March 2026

Time: 3:00 – 3:45PM

A range of training and guidance materials are available, including face-to-face workshops and online resources tailored to support you and council officers.

Officers from the department have commenced contacting council Chief Executive Officers to discuss setting up a session to provide you and your council with detailed information about the amendments. The department's online training platform, LG Central has been updated with resources including factsheets, policies, and model procedures to reflect these changes.

Please note that the Honourable Ann Leahy MP, Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers has also written to Mayors and Councillors to advise of this milestone.

We value the strong and constructive relationship we share with the local government sector. Thank you for your ongoing collaboration and commitment as we work together to embed these reforms across the sector.

The department's Local Government Division are here to help you navigate the changes and what they mean for you. If you have any questions, I encourage you reach out to the Southern Director Cassie White at [cassie.white@dlgww.qld.gov.au](mailto:cassie.white@dlgww.qld.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Bronwyn Blagoev**  
**Director General**

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# Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 – key reforms

## Empowering Councils

- › Re-empower councillors to appoint senior executive employees (via appointment panels) and Brisbane City Council councillors to appoint senior contract employees.
- › Clarify rating powers for Indigenous local governments, including providing a framework to enable them to rate in the future.
- › Amendments to section 143 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to facilitate local government access to essential State-owned quarry material.

## Empowering Mayors

- › Reinforcement of the mayor as the official spokesperson of the local government.
- › Clarification that the mayor is the default chairperson of ordinary and special meetings of the local government.

## Improve conflicts of interest and register of interests framework

- › Replace the existing conflicts of interest framework with a material personal interest and conflict of interest framework.

## Reduce red tape

- › General approval for major policy decisions about Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements assistance to be made during local government caretaker periods.
- › Remove conduct breaches from the councillor conduct framework.
- › Remove duplication in reporting requirements in the annual report.
- › Change mandatory training requirements for candidates and councillors.
- › Remove regulation-making power in relation to functions/responsibilities of councillor advisors.
- › Streamline the postal ballot application process.
- › Electoral Commission of Queensland to initiate a review process and amend deadline of review of wards/divisions and councillors before a quadrennial election.
- › Remove the requirement to provide the Minister with a public benefit assessment report.

## Provide certainty about councillor remuneration, leaves of absence, vacancies and eligibility

- › Clarify councillors are entitled to remuneration from the date their term starts or date appointed, until the date their term ends.
- › Clarify that a councillor absent from council (with or without leave of absence) is entitled to remuneration.
- › Clarify that a leave of absence does not stop a councillor participating in meetings, nor limit that councillor undertaking other responsibilities.
- › Clarify that a councillor's office becomes vacant if they are elected or appointed to fill a vacancy in the office of Mayor.
- › Provide for the automatic removal from office of a councillor who nominates as a candidate in a state election.

## Promote good governance and decision-making

- › Enabling sound and robust decision-making by Brisbane City Council's Establishment and Coordination Committee ('Civic Cabinet') and amending the information disclosure provisions.
- › Implement the recommendation of a Parliamentary Ethics Committee report by providing that the power for councillors to request information from the CEO does not apply to a Parliamentary proceeding (e.g. a submission to a committee, tabled paper).

## Enhance safeguards for election candidates and participants

- › Remove the requirement for an election candidate/participant to include a physical address in election material.
- › Instead, a candidate or participant would be given the option of including a PO Box address or other form of address prescribed by regulation.

## Minor, administrative and technical amendments

- › Allow Brisbane City Council to adopt its budget before 1 August to align with other councils.
- › Ensure the name of a councillor who engages in unsuitable meeting conduct is included in the conduct register.
- › Clarify that the obligation of trustee councils applies to all trustee councils.
- › Update references in legislation.
- › Allow councils to use existing complaints processes for competitive neutrality complaints.
- › Allow a person to act as Independent Assessor for more than six months in a 12-month period.
- › Align the superannuation arrangements for permanent local government employees in the *Local Government Act 2009* with upcoming changes to Commonwealth superannuation legislation.