MINISTER WELCOMES LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS TASKFORCE PAPER, WHICH AIMS TO CUT RED TAPE

Local Government Minister Don Page today welcomed the release of a Discussion Paper by the Local Government Acts Taskforce, which represents the next stage of a new Local Government Act for NSW and called on the sector and the public to have their say.

“It is now over to the NSW community, who will now get a further chance to have their say on these important proposals for a new local government framework for the State,” Mr Page said.

“The public release of the Discussion Paper signals the beginning of the second stage of the consultation process established by the Taskforce to deliver a new Local Government Act that will guide the way local councils will operate into the future.”

The Taskforce was established last year by the Government, and its members are Mr John Turner, Mrs Gabrielle Kibble, Dr Ian Tiley and Mr Stephen Blackadder.

Stage one of the Taskforce’s work was the public release of a Preliminary Ideas paper which sought the views of local government stakeholders and the public on what in the existing legislation has been working well, what has not been working well and what might a new legislative framework for local government look like for the future.

The Discussion Paper explores major areas of reform including what should be the guiding role and principles for local government, the strategic framework, and how council operations can achieve maximum efficiency.

Proposals by the Taskforce include:

- Integrated planning and reporting
- Greater use of technology
- Streamlining of public land management
- Simplification of approvals, orders and enforcement
- Revised procurement, capital expenditure framework and financial management

The Taskforce is keen to receive further feedback on the proposals it has laid out for a new Act which are expected to be enabling, less prescriptive, avoid unnecessary red tape and recognise the diversity of local government across the State.

The Paper contains a discussion of the special provisions of this Act and explores whether change is required.
“I’d like to take this opportunity to thank the Taskforce for its excellent work to date and urge the local government sector and the public to participate in this open and transparent consultation process,” Mr Page said.

“I encourage everyone with an interest in these issues to have their say, lodge a submission or attend a Taskforce workshop, and ensure that the Government considers their views when reviewing the Taskforce recommendations later in the year.”

The Discussion Paper will be available from the Taskforce webpage via www.dlg.nsw.gov.au and the Government’s ‘Have Your Say’ website.

The Taskforce will also be holding a further round of face-to-face workshops in metropolitan and regional areas of the State during the coming months. Details of the upcoming workshop program will be posted on the Taskforce webpage. Feedback received during consultation will be placed on the Taskforce webpage.

The final work of the Taskforce will be to deliver a report to the Government by September with recommendations about what a new legislative framework for local government might look like.

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