

# Office of Local Government



## Message from Minister Hancock

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24 April 2020



### Supporting local councils and communities during COVID-19

I am writing today to once again express my gratitude for the hard work that councils and council staff are undertaking to respond to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Your amazing efforts in keeping services and infrastructure going in these trying times has no doubt helped mitigate the impact of this crisis upon the community.

Your feedback has greatly assisted in shaping our response to date. As you would be aware, in March I amended the Local Government Act to allow councillors to [meet by an audio-visual link](#) instead of attending in person. Feedback on this change has been overwhelmingly positive.

Last week I also announced a number of [regulatory changes](#) to provide councils with the flexibility to adjust to rapidly shifting circumstances.

These changes ensure council resources continue to be focused on frontline COVID-19 response efforts and allow councils to provide financial relief to businesses and residents.

I remain acutely aware of the significant financial impacts suffered by local councils and the ongoing challenges you are facing.

**My priority is securing support to ensure that councils are able to keep people in jobs.** On that note, I want to once again congratulate both LGNSW and the unions for their work on finalising the Local Government (COVID-19) Splinter Award 2020. I also want to express my thanks to all councils who have signed up to it.

Councils are certainly playing their part and I recognise that many are providing rates and fees relief in the millions of dollars. This is the local government sector doing what it does best – supporting their local community. I am continuing to advocate on your behalf to my Cabinet colleagues to ensure you receive the support you need.

Please keep up to date with recent developments on the [Office of Local Government COVID-19 page](#). I also encourage you to continue to contact your OLG Council Engagement Manager with any questions you may have.

Stay well.

**Shelley Hancock**  
**Minister for Local Government**