



**Shelley Hancock**  
Minister for Local Government

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETINGS PERMITTED FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS**

The NSW Government has authorised local councils to hold official meetings electronically instead of physically for a further six months as our communities continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said virtual meetings have been instrumental in ensuring the State's 128 councils continue to function while minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

"Over the past six months our councils have had the ability to hold official meetings by electronic means to protect councillors, staff and members of the public from COVID-19," Mrs Hancock said.

"With councillors debating and determining important community issues at council meetings, it's been vital that this decision making process has continued.

"During the height of the pandemic, the overwhelming majority of the State's 128 local councils held virtual meetings, with many councils still choosing to meet electronically.

"Importantly public access to electronic meetings is guaranteed with councils required to livestream them so local residents can tune in and keep a recording online for at least 12 months."

The regulatory extension means councils have the ability to continue to meet electronically for a further six months until March 25 next year.

Mrs Hancock said the Government is also exploring the use of remote access to council meetings to help increase diversity in local government including female representation.

"Many councils hold their meetings at night which can be difficult for people with family and carer responsibilities," Mrs Hancock.

"Remote access to council meetings could help us overcome one of the barriers to increasing the number of female councillors in NSW councils."

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