



**Shelley Hancock**  
Minister for Local Government

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Tuesday, 9 March 2021

### **CHANGES TO ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN TO RUN FOR COUNCIL**

The NSW Government is set to scrap a number of outdated meeting practice policies as part of a plan to increase diversity including female representation in local government.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said under new proposed changes councillors with carer and work responsibilities will be permitted to attend council meetings virtually as well as have carer costs covered.

“For too long we have had a local government system whereby women have faced a number of barriers from participating,” Mrs Hancock said.

“I have heard loud and clear that we need to bring a number of meeting practices into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is why we’re looking to extend the use of remote meeting attendance and mandating the reimbursement of carer expenses, including childcare.

“By making these changes, funding a campaign to encourage more women to stand for election and rolling out statewide candidate workshops, it’s my hope we shift the dial towards a more diverse local government sector at this September’s council elections.”

Under the plan, a council could permit a councillor to participate in council or committee meetings by audio-visual link if they can’t attend in person because of carer responsibilities, ill health, disability or natural disaster.

Virtual meeting attendance would also be permitted for individual councillors if they are absent from the local area due to a prior work commitment. Appropriate safeguards would be put in place to ensure councillors continue to live and work in their local area.

The NSW Government is also strengthening requirements for local councils to meet councillor carer costs.

Under current guidelines, councils are strongly encouraged to meet the reasonable cost of councillor care arrangements including childcare expenses to allow them to undertake their civic duties

The Government is now changing local government regulations to include specific provisions for councils to financially support councillors with carer responsibilities.

A consultation paper on the use of remote meetings has been released to assist councils and other interested organisations and individuals to make submissions by May 3.

More information can be found on the Office of Local Government website [here](#).

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