



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, 11 June 2021

### **INDEPENDENT REVIEW SET TO CRACK DOWN ON COUNCILLOR BAD BEHAVIOUR**

The NSW Government has commissioned a review of the statutory framework for cracking down on badly behaved councillors to ensure it continues to allow quick and effective action to be taken for misconduct.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said the independent review would examine if penalties for councillors breaching the code of conduct remain sufficient, and ways to reduce the time and cost of complaints handling.

“Residents rightly expect high standards of behaviour from their elected representatives and the NSW Government has zero tolerance for councillors who put petty politics and egos ahead of serving the local community,” Mrs Hancock said.

“The Model Code of Conduct sets strict standards of behaviour for the 1,300 councillors at the state’s 128 councils to help ensure the ethical, accountable and transparent operation of local government.

“While the majority of councillors do the right thing, the NSW Government is determined to ensure those elected representatives who breach community standards face the consequences.”

The review will examine the effectiveness of penalties available to councils, the Office of Local Government and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Mrs Hancock said it will also look at the processes for making code of conduct complaints, the timeliness of disciplinary action, and misconduct frameworks implemented in other jurisdictions.

“The review will make recommendations for any legislative, policy and operational changes required to ensure NSW has the strongest system in the country to target bad behaviour and enforce high standards of conduct in our local councils,” Mrs Hancock said.

“The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that councils and the Office of Local Government are well placed to take quick and effective action against councillors who engage in misconduct so the public can have confidence in the people they elect to represent them.”

Gary Kellar PSM has been appointed to carry out the review following his recent involvement in an expert panel examining of the local government misconduct framework in Queensland in 2017.

A local government specialist, Mr Kellar was the general manager of Logan City Council for 26 years.

The terms of reference for the independent review can be found on the Office of Local Government website at [www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/misconduct-and-intervention/review-of-councillor-misconduct-framework](http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/misconduct-and-intervention/review-of-councillor-misconduct-framework).

**MEDIA:**

**Caterina Polistina | Minister Hancock | 0439 196 539**