



Wendy Tuckerman
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW CONDUCT FRAMEWORK FOR NSW COUNCILS

The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government's reform of integrity and accountability for councils has reached a new milestone, with a new framework being developed to ensure the highest standard of conduct from elected officials on local councils.

Minister for Local Government Wendy Tuckerman said the changes are proposed following an independent review of the existing accountability framework for NSW councils.

"We know the majority of our state's 1,200 councillors do the right thing, however the increasing number of interventions and inquiries into councils are a clear indication that councillor conduct needs to improve," Mrs Tuckerman said.

"These steps will strengthen the state's councillor conduct framework and introduce greater accountability to ensure councillors meet high standards of integrity, honesty and behaviour rightly expected by the communities they serve."

The reforms being proposed by the Government respond to the recommendations from the independent Kellar review of the councillor conduct framework in NSW, which was released for public comment last December.

A key element of the updated framework will be the establishment of independent conduct review panels, similar in operation to the successful NSW Planning Panels, to deal with councillor conduct issues.

Stronger mandatory training and development requirements will also be introduced, as well as tougher deterrents and stronger sanctions for councillor misconduct, including the ability to impose financial penalties on individuals.

"This is once-in-a-generation reform to the way the state government and councils deal with conduct complaints and it will put NSW at the forefront, when it comes to managing councillor conduct," Mrs Tuckerman said.

"In total our councils invest more than \$12 billion in services and other functions, and have over \$120 billion worth of assets under their control. Good conduct from councillors is critical in ensuring they can carry out their roles effectively and give the public full confidence in the decisions they make."

A roadmap for the introduction of the new conduct framework has been developed that will see the establishment of a Ministerial implementation taskforce following the state election, to provide advice and support on the detailed design of the reforms.

Under the roadmap, amendments to the *Local Government Act 1993* and Regulation will also be prepared to implement the reforms. It's expected a Bill will be introduced to Parliament in the last quarter of 2023, with the new councillor conduct framework to come into effect early in 2024.

MEDIA: Damien Bolte | 0498 359 624