

Local Government Red Tape Reduction Taskforce

Terms of Reference

Background

The Commonwealth, State and Local Governments play important roles in supporting efficient and effective infrastructure, housing and service delivery across Queensland.

The Queensland Government is committed to working in partnership with Queensland's councils to deliver an empowered, strong and sustainable local government sector.

To support the achievement of this objective, at the 2024 State Election, the Queensland Government committed to partner with councils to form a taskforce to identify initiatives to streamline approvals and remove barriers.

Strategic context

Queensland's 77 councils are responsible for delivering the local infrastructure and services that make local communities great places to live.

It's important that councils are supported by state and federal legislative frameworks, approvals and oversight processes, and compliance requirements that enable the cost effective and efficient delivery of the local infrastructure and services their communities need.

More than ever before councils are responsible for providing a wide range of infrastructure and services to meet their communities needs and wants. For this reason, it is anticipated that a wide range of opportunities and initiatives to streamline processes and reduce red tape will be identified through consultation undertaken by the taskforce.

The priority of the taskforce will be on identifying initiatives that support efficient and effective council infrastructure project delivery, grants administration and operations. Other areas of red tape reduction identified through the taskforce's work will be captured for future consideration.

Purpose

The Local Government Red Tape Reduction Taskforce (the Taskforce) is established to provide advice to the Queensland Government about reducing red tape for Queensland councils.

Responsibilities

The Taskforce's main objective is to identify opportunities to streamline approvals and remove barriers for local government projects.

The Taskforce should achieve this by providing advice, including the making of recommendations, for consideration by the Queensland Government and identify advocacy opportunities to engage with the Commonwealth.

The Taskforce may also make recommendations directed to Local Governments, or their representatives, for their consideration and action.

The Taskforce's Recommendations should aim to achieve the main outcomes, being:

- reduce costs for council, ratepayers and other stakeholders;
- improve the efficiency of local governments through the identification of unnecessary and/or inefficient regulation;
- enhance the long-term sustainability of Queensland's local governments.

Recommendations made by the Taskforce:

- must provide a clear evidence base to support the proposed course of action including analysis on how the recommendation will support the main outcomes;
- should identify responsible levels of government for implementation and delivery;
- should consider opportunities for red tape reduction across short-, medium and long-term timeframes.

Scope

The Taskforce will make recommendations about opportunities to reduce the impact of red tape (State, Commonwealth) on councils across the following key areas:

- Project delivery – the approvals and frameworks required to deliver local infrastructure projects, including those that support timely delivery of housing.
- Grants administration – the approach to administering grant funding to councils, including funding guideline requirements and timeframes and project administration and reporting frameworks (State and Commonwealth).
- Council operations - opportunities to reduce the impacts that unnecessary or inefficient regulation places on council operations, including:
 - the financial costs for councils and ratepayers of delivery council of essential infrastructure and services; and
 - impacts on council workforce capability and capacity.

Additionally, the Taskforce may seek input from councils and include information in its final report about opportunities for future reform in the following areas:

- impacts of depreciation on local government
- reducing local government red tape for other stakeholders.

The Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers (the Minister) may ask the Taskforce to consider other matters.

Consultation

To deliver on its purpose and responsibilities the Taskforce will engage and consult widely with stakeholders, including with the Red Tape Reduction Engagement Forum (Engagement Forum), councils, other identified interested parties and across jurisdictions, including the Commonwealth.

The Engagement Forum will provide a structured mechanism for the Taskforce to engage with key stakeholders, including: Queensland state agencies, key local government sector stakeholders and the Assistant Minister to the Deputy Premier and Assistant Minister for Planning, Housing and Better Regulation.

Key deliverables

The Taskforce will deliver a final report to the Minister by 30 June 2025.

The Taskforce will also deliver a draft report to the Executive Steering Committee by 30 April 2025.

Within 30 days of establishment, the Taskforce must provide a Delivery Plan to the Executive Steering Committee for endorsement.

Membership and Resources

The Taskforce will be led by Mr Andrew Chesterman.

The Taskforce will be supported by a secretariat and project team provided by the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWV).

Governance and Reporting

The Taskforce reports to the Minister.

The Taskforce will receive strategic oversight and advice from the Local Government Red Tape Reduction Executive Steering Committee (ESC), chaired by the Director-General of DLGWV.

The ESC is responsible for:

- endorsing the Taskforce's delivery plan and monitoring progress in delivery of activities,
- reviewing and advising on draft and final reports
- setting the strategic direction for the Taskforce in delivering on these Terms of Reference, or other matters as directed by the Minister.

Timeframes

The Taskforce is established for the period January to June 2025.

The Taskforce's establishment may be extended or amended by the Minister.