

ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Report No. 47, 56th Parliament
Inquiry into the Feasibility of Introducing Expenditure Caps for Queensland Local Government Elections

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

On 15 September 2020 the Economics and Governance Committee (Committee) tabled in the Legislative Assembly its Report (No. 47, 56th Parliament).

The Queensland Government response to the Committee's Report and recommendations is provided below.

Committee recommendation 1:

That the definition of electoral expenditure in the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 be aligned with the definition in the Electoral Act 2012 subject to further consultation with stakeholders on relevant inclusions and exclusions.

Committee recommendation 2:

That a sliding scale of electoral expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections be established with reference to the number of electors in the relevant ward/division or local government area, and including differentiation for mayoral and councillor candidates and divided and undivided councils where appropriate.

Committee Recommendation 3:

That further analysis and consultation with stakeholders be undertaken to determine caps of appropriate magnitude, with particular reference to the models proposed by the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs and the Local Government Association of Queensland.

Committee Recommendation 4:

That further analysis and consultation be undertaken to determine an appropriate cap for third party electoral expenditure, and a system of third party registration be established to support the monitoring and enforcement of third party compliance with the established cap.

Committee Recommendation 5:

That electoral expenditure incurred by an associated entity for Queensland local government elections be treated as though it was incurred by the electoral participant with which the entity is associated.

Committee Recommendation 6:

That scheme penalties and recovery provisions be aligned with those for the state government electoral expenditure cap scheme under the Electoral Act 1992, and further consultation be undertaken on the potential prescription of scheme offences and integrity offences.

Committee Recommendation 7:

That the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs coordinate with the Electoral Commission of Queensland to ensure election participants have access to a suite of information resources and training to support their compliance with the established scheme.

Queensland Government response:

The Government supports the Committee's seven recommendations in principle. The Queensland Government notes that consultation with stakeholders and further analysis as recommended by the Committee will inform the final scheme design and will provide the opportunity to align the respective systems regulating electoral expenditure for state and local government elections.

Subject to consultation with stakeholders and further policy analysis, it is proposed the caps scheme should apply to both quadrennial local government elections and by-elections conducted under the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*.