



Minister for Local Government,
Minister for Racing and
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Our ref: MC19/6265

Your ref: A512851

16 DEC 2019

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

1 William Street
Brisbane Queensland 4000
PO Box 15009
City East Queensland 4002
Telephone +61 7 3719 7560
Email lgrma@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Website www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au

ABN 65 959 415 158

Dear Neil

Thank you for your letter of 29 November 2019 regarding petition number 3204-19, received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 26 November 2019 about a request to impose a two-term limit (eight years) for Mayors and Councillors to address corruption in Local Government.

The Queensland Government is committed to an ongoing reform program to strengthen the transparency, accountability and integrity measures that apply to the system of Local Government in Queensland. This reform program has occurred in several stages, with the passage of the *Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and other Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (Belcarra Stage 1 Act) in 2018 and the *Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and other Legislation Amendment Act 2019* (Belcarra Stage 2 Act) in 2019.

The reform program is continuing with the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019 which was introduced into the Queensland Legislative Assembly in November 2019.

The reforms implemented as part of the Belcarra Stage 1 Act include the prohibition of donations from property developers, the automatic suspension of Councillors charged with serious offences, and establishing the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA) to deal with complaints about the conduct of Councillors.

The reforms implemented under the Belcarra Stage 2 Act are wide-ranging and include:

- mandatory training for election candidates
- new restrictions on decisions during the caretaker period prior to an election
- new restrictions on the use of discretionary funds from 1 January in election years
- improved real-time election donation disclosures
- transparent disclosures of donation and gift sources
- right to information laws to apply to Brisbane City Council (BCC) civic cabinet meetings
- expanded Councillor rights to access Local Governments' information
- reinstating responsibilities for Councillors in preparing Council budgets (Mayors will no longer have sole responsibility for preparation of a budget)
- changes to Mayoral powers to direct Chief Executive Officers and Senior Executive Officers and the appointment of Senior Executive Officers
- expanding the jurisdiction of OIA to investigate complaints about the conduct of BCC Councillors.

The Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019 proposes to amend the Local Government legislation to provide for new register of interest requirements, and new and clarified conflict of interest requirements.

The Queensland Government's ongoing reform program comprehensively addresses issues related to Councillor misconduct and corruption risk in Local Government, and it is not proposed to pursue time or term limits for Mayors and Councillors.

I would like to thank the petitioners for raising this matter with me and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stirling', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

STIRLING HINCHLIFFE MP
Minister for Local Government,
Minister for Racing and
Minister for Multicultural Affairs