



THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN

AUSTRALIA



1 INTRODUCTION

Australia is a country in the south Pacific with a population of 20,434,176 and a land area of 7,692,024 sq km.

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a federal system of government established by federation in 1901 comprising six states and three self-governing territories. The federal parliament, based in the capital Canberra, is bicameral, comprising a House of Representatives and a Senate.

The House of Representatives has 150 members, each representing a separate electoral division. Members are elected for terms of up to three years following the single transferable vote system. The Senate has 76 senators; 12 are elected for each of the six states, and two each for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the Northern Territory. Senators are elected using a proportional representation system. State senators are elected for six-year terms. The election of territory senators takes place at the same time as elections for the House of Representatives.

The head of state is HM Queen Elizabeth II,

represented by a governor-general who is appointed for a five-year term on the advice of the Australian prime minister.

The head of government is the prime minister. The governor-general appoints the cabinet on the advice of the prime minister. All members of cabinet must be members of parliament.

Powers are distributed between the national government's (called the Commonwealth Government) six states: New South Wales (50 members), Victoria (37), Queensland (28), South Australia (11), Western Australia (15), Tasmania (5); and three territories – the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory (2 each) and Norfolk Island. The Constitution defines the extent of law-making powers between the national government and the states/territories. Voting in federal elections and most state and territory elections is compulsory.

All the states and the Northern Territory have established systems of local government and enacted legislation to confer local government powers and responsibilities. The ACT and Norfolk Island are unitary territories with no

local government.

In 2004/2005 the contribution of local government to GDP was 2.06% or AU\$18,441m out of AU\$896,373m.

2 POLITICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AUSTRALIA

2.1 Position of local government in the state

The federal government has responsibilities for foreign affairs, immigration, trade, armed forces, taxation and international relations.

Although the federal government has no formal responsibility for local government, it does provide substantial financial assistance grants (FAGs) to councils, and special purpose funding. The Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads has federal responsibility for the administration of the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

The most recent House of Representatives and Senate elections were held in November 2007, where Kevin Rudd, representing the Australian Labour party was elected as Prime Minister.

States and territories generally have responsibility for education, health, policing, electricity, water, transport, main roads, ports, local government and housing. Each has a legislative assembly (some are bicameral); each state has a premier as head, and each territory has a chief minister.

The ACT and Norfolk Island have a unitary territory government and no local government. All other individual states and territories establish their local government and each enacts its own legislation to confer local government powers and responsibilities (see 3.2).

The federal Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads is responsible for allocating federal funding for local government via the state and territory governments which recommend the intra-jurisdictional distribution of the funding to local government authorities (known as councils); for producing an annual report on local government to be tabled in the federal parliament; and for policy affecting local government and national awards recognising excellence in local government.

Local government is a creature of the states and territories, each of which has its own system of local government. The state and territory ministers for local government administer local government legislation and oversee the local government departments in their jurisdictions, which provide advice, support and compliance programmes to help councils achieve good governance. Where there is a

Table 1. Population distribution of Australian councils as at 30 June 2004

| Population | No. of councils | | | | | | | Total |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|------------|
| | New South Wales | Northern Territory | Queensland | South Australia | Tasmania | Victoria | Western Australia | |
| Less than 5,000 | 26 | 58 | 88 | 29 | 6 | 2 | 88 | 297 |
| 5-10,000 | 27 | 1 | 19 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 14 | 89 |
| 10-20,000 | 20 | 1 | 23 | 14 | 7 | 15 | 14 | 94 |
| 20-50,000 | 33 | 2 | 9 | 11 | 6 | 17 | 13 | 91 |
| 50-100,000 | 26 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 15 | 10 | 67 |
| 100-150,000 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 16 | 1 | 34 |
| 150-200,000 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 19 |
| More than 200,000 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| Totals | 152 | 63 | 157 | 73 | 29 | 79 | 142 | 695 |

failure of governance in a council, the ministers have authority to dissolve councils and appoint administrators to carry out all local government functions. Generally this will be accompanied by a public inquiry on the alleged failing of the council concerned. Even where a state/territory constitution provides for a continuing system of local government such powers persist (and state constitutions can be amended relatively easily).

As there is no federal jurisdiction over local government, local government differs significantly from one state or territory to the next. However, over the past decade efforts have been made to improve the performance of local government and both federal and state/territory governments have been cooperating with local government in this. This has resulted in less prescription of the roles and functions of local government, and greater accountability and tighter requirements for corporate planning and reporting.

3 LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Constitutional provisions

There is no reference to local government in the national constitution. However, it is recognised in all state constitutions.

3.2 Main legislative texts

Each of the states and the Northern Territory has a comprehensive local government act setting out the powers, roles and responsibilities of local councils. In most cases local government has wide-ranging powers to promote the good governance and wellbeing of local areas, but usually under close scrutiny and supervision by the state or territory. Between 1989-1999 all the local government acts were reviewed, generally resulting in less prescription of councils' roles and functions, but subject to greater public accountability and tighter requirements for corporate planning and reporting.

The main legislative texts are:

- Victoria: Local Government Act 1989
- New South Wales: Local Government Act 1993
- Queensland: Local Government Act 1993
- Tasmania: Local Government Act 1993

- Northern Territory: Local Government Act 1993
- Australian Federal Government: Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995
- Western Australia: Local Government Act 1995
- South Australia: Local Government Act 1999.

The minister for local government in each state and the Northern Territory is responsible for administering these Acts. In the federal sphere it is the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads. Local government also carries out a wide range of functions under other legislation such as planning and development control and environmental management.

4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

4.1 Main divisions

The Australian Classification of Local Governments, first published in 1994, is the principal system used to classify councils. It is used in the Commonwealth of Australia's annual Local Government National Report to the Commonwealth Parliament on the operation of the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995. The 22 classifications are based on population size, growth and density, and location whether in metropolitan, regional, rural or remote areas.

Local government is generally single-tiered with regional councils that supplement local government service delivery.

Councils may voluntarily contribute administrative resources to form regional organisations of councils for the purposes of purchasing or delivering services jointly and realising economies of scale from pooling resources. There are 62 regional organisations of councils across Australia.

4.2 Distribution of local governments and population

The average population in the area of jurisdiction of a local government in June 2004 was 28,432, while the median population was 7,833. There was a wide range of population sizes, from Ugar Island Council, Queensland, which covered an area with 57 people, to Brisbane City Council which covered a population of 971,575. 70% of the population lived in urban areas.

5 DEMOCRATIC AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The system of election for local councils varies from one state to another. Table 3 outlines the different practices. Some states have adopted voluntary voting, while others have compulsory or universal postal voting for council elections in order to increase voter turnout.

Mayors may be elected directly or indirectly. Some mayors have considerable political and/or executive authority.

The methods for electing councillors include

Table 2. Distribution of urban and rural and regional councils by jurisdiction as at 31 March 2005

| State/Territory | Population | Number of councils | | | Proportion of rural and regional councils |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|---|
| | | Total | Urban | Rural and regional | |
| Australian Capital Territory | 326,671 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| New South Wales | 6,803,003 | 152 | 81 | 71 | 47 |
| Northern Territory | 204,453 | 63 | 6 | 57 | 90 |
| Queensland | 4,001,023 | 157 | 65 | 92 | 59 |
| South Australia | 1,546,274 | 73 | 28 | 45 | 62 |
| Tasmania | 487,185 | 29 | 10 | 19 | 66 |
| Victoria | 5,052,377 | 79 | 57 | 22 | 28 |
| Western Australia | 2,028,668 | 142 | 39 | 103 | 73 |
| Total | 20,449,654 | 695 | 286 | 409 | 59 |

N.B. One-quarter of the land mass of Australia is unincorporated and without local government

preferential or single transferable voting, proportional representation and first-past-the-post.

As of September 2005, 27.8% of councillors were women. As of October 2005 there were 130 women mayors, representing 18.7% of all councils.

5.1 Council structures

There are a wide variety of council structures in Australia, differing both between and within states. Councils have considerable discretion over committee systems and organisational structures, but are usually required to conduct nearly all formal business in open session.

There are both directly and indirectly elected mayors with terms of between one and four years; most are part-time, with the exception of a few large cities. Only Queensland has some explicitly full-time, paid councillors, although in larger local government areas many councillors work long hours. Part-time councillors receive expenses which may be substantial (eg mayors of larger cities). In some states (New South Wales and Victoria) independent tribunals set allowances for mayors and councillors.

5.2 Indigenous community councils

The Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia have made special provision for councils serving small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These are all recognised as local governing bodies for the purposes of federal funding, and many participate in state or territory local government associations. Normally, such community councils do not levy rates based on land-rate systems, depending on federal and/or state assistance grants and other sources of revenue support.

5.3 Local government staffing

Local government staff are recruited by the local authority. Central government staff are not deployed to local government.

Local authorities are required by law throughout Australia to have a chief executive officer. In New South Wales, they are also required to have a public officer. The head of the paid service is normally referred to as general manager or chief executive officer.

A typical staff structure has a general manager, director of engineering services, director of health services, director of community services and director of corporate services together forming a management team. An authority may set up other directorates around its functions.

5.4 Independent scrutiny

Councils are subject to extensive scrutiny of their operations by the state/territory government and the community. Typically, councils are required to prepare and publish detailed corporate plans, quarterly reviews and annual reports, and in some

cases an updated corporate plan and draft budget must be put on public exhibition and submissions considered before either is adopted. Nearly all states have systems of performance indicators or comparative data for council services which are published annually. An annual Local Government National Report is prepared for the federal parliament under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

State and territories have their own ombudsmen and anti-corruption tribunals which can investigate council irregularities. As they are now subject to national competition policy and the federal Trade Practices Act, they can be investigated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the National Competition Council and equivalent state/territory bodies.

6 DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY COMPETENCE

Although there are variations from state to state, councils have statutory responsibility for:

- Town planning
- Refuse collection and disposal
- Local roads (around 85% of the roads in Australia) and airports in regional and remote areas
- Health and environmental protection – which is shared with other spheres of government
- Water provision in those states or parts of a state where this is a council responsibility.

The Australian Capital Territory government carries out both state and municipal government functions. Councils have discretion to provide cultural, leisure, sports and economic services.

7 FINANCE

7.1 Revenue

The aggregate local authority annual revenue in 2004/2005 was Aus\$21.42bn (US\$16.80bn). Its major sources were:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Tax | 39% |
| 2. Sales of goods and services | 31% |
| 3. Intergovernmental grants | 11% |
| 4. Interest on investments | 3% |
| 5. Other | 16% |

Local authorities raise more than 85% of their own revenue, relying on grants for about 15%. These proportions vary considerably from state to state and between urban and smaller rural municipalities.

7.2 Revenue-sharing

There is no formal revenue-sharing policy between the Australian government and local government, but the Australian government provides substantial financial assistance to councils through various programmes amounting to Aus\$2bn annually, or just over 1% of Australian government taxation revenue.

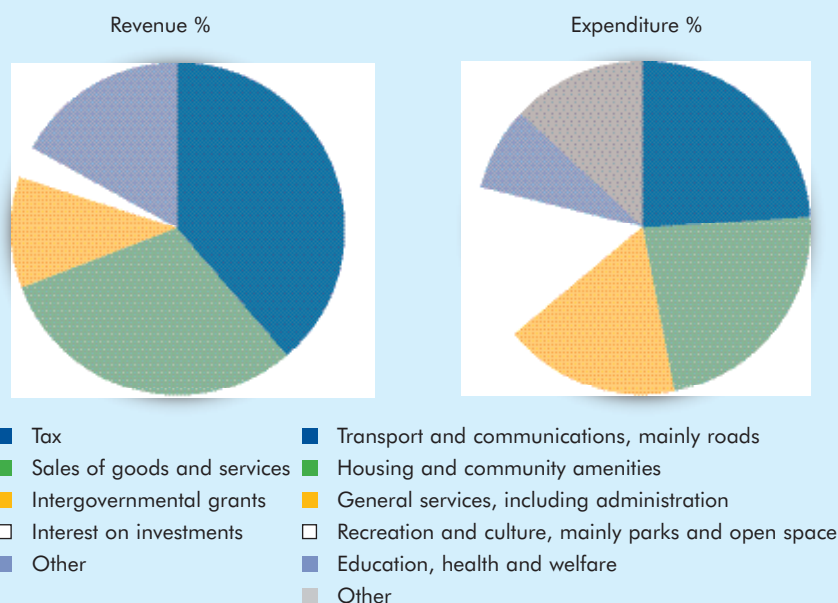
Transfer payments from the Australian government to local government are by way of grants known as financial assistance grants (FAGs) under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995 and specific-purpose payments.

In 2005/2006 Aus\$1,12bn in general purpose FAGs and Aus\$497m in local road FAGs were paid to 702 local government bodies. In 2006/2007, 701 local government authorities, including some bodies that are not formal councils, will receive Aus\$1,16bn in general-purpose FAGs and Aus\$518m in local road FAGs. The grants are allocated to the states and territories on a per capita basis. The local government grants commissions in each jurisdiction then determine the distribution of the grants to councils within their jurisdiction based on the national principles of horizontal equalisation in the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995. Horizontal equalisation equalises the capacity of councils to provide the average range, level and quality of service by reasonable effort, taking account of differences in the expenditure between council

Table 3. Local government electoral systems in Australia

| State | Electoral cycle | Obligation | Voting system | Other features |
|--------------------|----------------------------|------------|---|---|
| New South Wales | 4 years | Compulsory | Preferential or PR | Mayors may be elected directly or indirectly |
| Northern Territory | 4 years | Compulsory | Preferential | Mayors elected directly |
| Queensland | 4 years | Compulsory | Preferential or first-past-the-post where 2 or more councillors to be elected | Mayors elected directly using preferential voting system |
| South Australia | 4 years | Voluntary | PR | Universal postal voting |
| Tasmania | Half council every 2 years | Voluntary | PR | Mayor and deputy directly elected using universal postal voting |
| Victoria | 4 years | Compulsory | PR where 2 or more councillors to be elected, otherwise preferential | Councils may choose to hold all postal elections |
| Western Australia | Half council every 2 years | Voluntary | First-past-the-post | Councils may choose to hold all postal elections |

Figure 1. The financial structure of local government in Australia



areas to provide average services as well as each council's capacity to raise revenue.

Both the general-purpose and road FAGs are untied, allowing local government authorities to spend them according to their community's priorities.

Generally, councils outside major urban centres with smaller populations and limited capacity to raise their own revenue will receive a greater share of the grants. The grants amount to 9% of total local government revenue nationally, but are in excess of half the revenue of some small and remote councils.

In 2005/2006, the Australian government paid Aus\$715m in specific-purpose payments directly to councils for providing such services as childcare, care for the disabled and local roads. Of the direct specific-purpose payments paid to councils, Aus\$600m was provided for local roads.

Councils also compete with businesses and community groups for funding from a wide range of Australian government programmes. For example, in 2005/2006, councils received Aus\$23m, or just over 48% of the value of grants provided, under the Regional Partnerships Programme which invests in projects that strengthen economic and social participation in the community.

The FAGs are untied general grants which councils can spend according to their community's priorities. Specific-purpose payments and funding from other Australian government programmes are for specified projects or activities councils commit to undertake.

The level of taxes raised by councils in each state and territory is disclosed to the relevant local government minister in the jurisdiction, as part of the statutory reporting requirements for councils. In New South Wales and Victoria, the local government ministers may veto increases in local government property taxes above the rate decided by the minister. In New South Wales this is generally the inflation rate.

7.3 Expenditure

Total local government expenditure in 2004/2005 was Aus\$18.44bn (US\$14.47bn).

The main items of expenditure were:

1. Transport and communications, mainly roads 24%
2. Housing and community amenities 23%
3. General services, including administration 17%
4. Recreation and culture 15%
5. Education, health and welfare 8%
6. Other 13%

In all jurisdictions councils are permitted to set deficit budgets. In Western Australia, the deficit cannot be more than 10% of the property tax revenue.

8 ORGANISATIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Each state and the Northern Territory has a local government association (in New South Wales there are two linked associations) headquartered in the jurisdiction's capital city. Membership of each association comprises the councils in the jurisdiction on a voluntary basis. All councils in Australia have chosen to be members of their state or territory local government association.

At the national level, the state and territory associations have combined to form the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), which has its headquarters in the capital – Canberra.

There are a number of other special-purpose groupings of local government. For example, the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors represents the seven councils covering the central business districts of the state capital cities and Darwin in the Northern Territory, and the National Seachange Taskforce represents councils on the coastline outside the major urban centres – which are experiencing rapid population growth as a result of people settling or retiring on the coast for lifestyle reasons.

All the associations promote the interests of and represent local government in intergovernmental forums and negotiations. The state associations also act as employer bodies for councils in industrial relations, provide training and capacity-building projects for councils and deliver a number of specialist services such as general insurance and workers' compensation insurance schemes for their member councils, or retirement income schemes for council employees.

ALGA represents local government on a wide range of federal/state ministerial councils, intergovernmental committees and advisory bodies.

The local government associations in New South Wales and Victoria have been created as incorporated bodies and are recognised in law by specific legislation passed by the parliaments in those states. In all the other states and the Northern Territory, the local government associations are recognised and incorporated under the primary piece of legislation regulating local government in the jurisdiction.

The associations are funded by subscription from their members, grants from state and territory governments, and fees for services, projects, research and publications produced by the associations. The Australian government sponsors ALGA's national conference, and purchases its services for project work.

The Australian Local Government Association is a member of the Asia Pacific Regional Section of United Cities and Local Government and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

9 INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The states of Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia have formalised relations with local government associations in their state through protocols for consultation and communication with local government. In Tasmania and Western Australia, the protocols have extended to bilateral agreements between individual councils or regional councils with the state government.

All the other governments in Australia engage with local government by instituting consultative arrangements on issues as the need arises.

The primary forum for intergovernmental relations in Australia is the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) which is comprised of the prime minister, premiers, chief ministers, and the ALGA president. COAG initiates, develops and implements national policy reforms requiring cooperative action between the Australian, state/territory and local government, in economic, security and environmental areas.

There is a Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council (LGPMC), under the COAG umbrella, comprising the ministers responsible for local government and planning from each state, territory and New Zealand; the federal local government minister; and the president of ALGA, which meets yearly.

ALGA also participates in federal/state ministerial councils for transport, information technology, regional development, culture and indigenous affairs. In some

cases ALGA has observer status only, although usually with the right to contribute to debate and importantly to be involved at senior officials' meetings.

The federal local government minister also hosts an annual round table meeting of the presidents and CEOs of ALGA and the state and territory local government associations to hear directly from local government's representative bodies about matters affecting local government.

At state and territory level, direct discussions occur between local government ministers and senior local government officials on all matters of mutual concern. There are numerous liaison committees to handle these processes. In South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia, there are standing bodies comprised of ministers and local government officials as part of the protocols the governments in these states have with local government for promoting intergovernmental relations with local government.

An intergovernmental agreement between the Australian government, the state and Northern Territory governments and ALGA, which seeks to improve intergovernmental relations on local government was signed in April 2006. The objectives of the inter-governmental agreement include providing for greater financial transparency between the three spheres of government in relation to local government service and functions, and improving the relationship and consultation between governments on local government matters.

10 E-GOVERNMENT

The Better Services, Better Government programme is the e-government strategy of the Australian Government Information Management Office. It maps out the next phase of the federal government's drive to move from placing government information and services online to a more comprehensive and integrated application of new technologies to government information, service delivery and administration. The strategy has six key objectives:

- Achieving greater efficiency and a return on investment in e-government
- Ensuring convenient access to government services and information
- Delivering services that are responsive to the needs of individual Australian households, businesses and civic organisations
- Integrating related government services into a single point of entry
- Building experience, user trust and confidence in the use of new technologies
- Enhancing closer citizen engagement in policy formulation and processes.

The strategy seeks to harness the benefits of more widespread use of, and familiarity with, online services by the broader Australian community as well as by the government itself.

The Better Services, Better Government strategy

does not link central government and local government, since local government is a state/territory responsibility. However, the Australian government Information Management Office has involved representatives from local government as well as the states and territories in discussions and working groups to promote e-government strategies at all levels.

There were an estimated 14.7 million internet users in Australia as at August 2006, representing 70% of the population.

Local e-government strategies have been developed by some state and territory local government associations. The Municipal Association of Victoria has IT best practice initiatives which include LGNet, its extranet site for member councils.

The Development Assessment Forum, a partnership between the Australian government, local government and industry, has developed protocols for electronically lodging building development applications. Local government is now seeking funding to begin rolling this system out for use by councils nationally.

Local government services and resources available electronically vary significantly from council to council. Some councils, particularly those in urban and larger regional centres, have a full range of electronic services available, while many of the smaller councils have few or no services available over the internet. Some state and territory local government associations have developed initiatives and policies on electronic services for local government.

The electronic support made available to elected councillors, including internet and email access, computer laptops and mobile phone use, is dependent on the resources of the council.

11 ENVISAGED REFORMS

In Queensland and Western Australia, reviews of structure and council sustainability have begun. These seek to achieve better service delivery outcomes from economies of scale in pooling resources.

As a result of a 2003 federal parliamentary inquiry into local government, a number of measures by the Australian government will be implemented. Among these are a study by the Productivity Commission into local government's own source revenue, a Commonwealth Grants Commission study into the interstate distribution of road FAGs, amending the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995 to ensure there is no reduction in FAGs for councils which amalgamate for a period of four years after amalgamation.

The intergovernmental agreement on local government will clarify the relationship between the three spheres of government in Australia.

12 MISCELLANEOUS

With the ageing Australian population and a globalised economy, local government along with

industry, generally, is facing difficulties and challenges. One difficulty is recruiting and retaining sufficient skilled staff, especially public works engineers and planners of whom there is an acute shortage.

The deterioration of local government assets is occurring across Australia. The shortfall in annual spending by councils to maintain roads in a fit-for-purpose condition is estimated at Aus\$419m, 10% of the estimated Aus\$4.3bn councils spend on local roads, or around 2% of the Aus\$18bn in total local government annual spending.

A number of councils outside the major urban centres on the coastline and in certain regional centres are experiencing rapid population growth as people settle or retire to these areas for lifestyle benefits. The affected councils have formed the National Seachange Taskforce to develop policies to deal with rapidly growing and ageing populations and to lobby governments for assistance.

12.1 Traditional authorities

Indigenous Australians may serve as councillors on any council in Australia. Of Australia's 695 councils as at July 2006, 90 are indigenous councils that operate in small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and are almost entirely comprised of indigenous councillors. There are 51 Aboriginal councils in the Northern Territory, 34 Aboriginal and Islander councils in Queensland, five Aboriginal councils in South Australia and one Aboriginal council in Western Australia. These councils are all recognised for federal funding and participate in their state or territory local government associations. Normally, indigenous councils do not levy property taxes based on land-rate systems, but depend on federal and state/territory grants as well as other sources for revenue support.

13 SUMMARY

Local government in Australia is extremely diverse as it is the responsibility of each state or territory. Electoral systems and the organisation of authorities vary considerably across the country. The state/territory minister for local government is responsible for administering the Local Government Act in each state/territory and has the power to intervene. A nationwide trend has been the effort to improve service delivery through the use of performance indicators and comparative data.

| Service | Delivering authority | | | Remarks |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|
| | Federal | Province/Territory | Local authority | |
| GENERAL ADMIN | | | | |
| Police | ● | ● | ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Australian Federal Police deals with federal and international matters. Each state also has its own police force. The fire service is a state responsibility, but local government takes responsibility for voluntary services. The Australian Electoral Commission deals with federal government elections. States deal with their own and those of local authorities. |
| Fire protection | | ● | ● | |
| Civil protection | ● | ● | | |
| Criminal justice | ● | ● | | |
| Civil justice | ● | ● | | |
| Civil status register | ● | ● | | |
| Statistical office | ● | | | |
| Electoral register | ● | ● | | |
| EDUCATION | | | | |
| Pre-school | | ● | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> States have primary responsibility for education, but federal government provides substantial funding. Tertiary education institutions come under the federal government and the states. |
| Primary | | ● | | |
| Secondary | | ● | | |
| Vocational and technical | | ● | | |
| Higher education | ● | ● | | |
| Adult education | | ● | | |
| Other | | ● | | |
| SOCIAL WELFARE | | | | |
| Kindergarten and nursery | | ● | | Income support is provided by the federal government. |
| Family welfare services | | ● | | |
| Welfare homes | | ● | ● | |
| Social security | ● | | | |
| PUBLIC HEALTH | | | | |
| Primary care | ● | | | Health standards are set by all levels of government (eg food areas are done by local government, while immunisation may be done by the federal government). |
| Hospitals | | ● | | |
| Health protection | ● | ● | ● | |
| HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING | | | | |
| Housing | | ● | | |
| Town planning | | | ● | |
| Agriculture land planning | | ● | | |
| TRANSPORT | | | | |
| Highways | ● | ● | ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All spheres of government are responsible for roads. Local governments own regional aerodromes, but they are governed by federal law. |
| Transport | ● | ● | | |
| Urban roads | | ● | ● | |
| Urban public transport | | ● | | |
| Ports | | ● | | |
| Airports | ● | | ● | |
| ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION | | | | |
| Water and sanitation | | ● | ● | All spheres of government are involved in environmental protection. |
| Refuse collection and disposal | | | ● | |
| Cemeteries and crematoria | | | ● | |
| Slaughterhouses | ● | | ● | |
| Environmental protection | ● | | ● | |
| Consumer protection | ● | ● | | |
| CULTURE, LEISURE and SPORTS | | | | |
| Theatre and concerts | | | ● | The majority of these are the responsibility of local government. |
| Museums and libraries | | | ● | |
| Parks and open spaces | | | ● | |
| Sports and leisure | | | ● | |
| Religious facilities | | | | |
| Other cultural facilities | | | ● | |
| | | | | |
| UTILITIES | | | | |
| Gas services | | ● | | |
| District heating | | ● | | |
| Water supply | | ● | ● | |
| ECONOMIC | | | | |
| Agriculture, forests and fisheries | ● | ● | ● | Many utilities are the responsibility of the state; local government is responsible for water in some states. All spheres of government participate in economic development. |
| Electricity | | ● | | |
| Economic promotion | ● | ● | ● | |
| Trade and industry | ● | ● | ● | |
| Tourism | ● | ● | ● | |
| Other economic services | ● | ● | ● | |

● = discretionary service by the local authority