



AUSTRALIA

SUMMARY

Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a federal division of power comprising six states and two territories. Local government is under the jurisdiction of each state and territory government. There is no constitutional provision for local government. The Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities (DIRDC) is responsible for local government policies and programmes for the Australian Government. There are 546 local government areas in Australia, all of which are single-tiered. In 2015-16 local government expenditure was 5.7% of total government expenditure, and in 2017, 32.2% of councillors were women. Local authorities raise over 90% of their own funds; however this proportion varies considerably between larger urban and smaller rural authorities. Although there are variations between the states and territories, councils typically have statutory responsibility for local infrastructure, health, water and sewerage amenities, community services including childcare, aged care and recreation, cultural and educational establishments, and commercial establishments including parking, aerodromes, cemeteries and quarries.

1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Commonwealth of Australia was established by federation in 1901 and is a federal constitutional monarchy.^{2.1a} The federal parliament, based in the capital Canberra, comprises 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 under the preferential 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. Following the 2016 national elections, 28.7% elected representatives and 40.8% of senators were women.^{2.1b} 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 prime minister. The governor-general appoints the cabinet, also on the advice of the prime minister, and all members of cabinet must be members of parliament. Members of parliament are distributed between the six states of the national government (called the Commonwealth Government): New South Wales (48 members), Victoria (37), Queensland (30), South Australia (11), Western Australia (15), Tasmania (5); and two territories – the ACT and the Northern Territory (2 each).

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions

Although local government is recognised in all state constitutions, and in the federal legislation which is effectively the constitution of the Northern Territory, there is no reference to local government in Australia's national constitution^{2.2a}.

2.2 Main legislative texts

There is no federal jurisdiction over local government. Each state or territory has its own local government legislation see table 2.1c and reference 2.2b-h. Typically, such legislation covers the role and powers of councils, conduct of local elections, qualifications of councillors, codes of conduct for councillors and mayors, procedures for council meetings, the role of council employees, requirements for financial management, accountability and reporting obligations, and powers to levy rates and charges. Between 1989 and 1999 all local government acts were reviewed, with Queensland and the Northern Territory's Acts being reviewed again in 2009 and 2011 respectively. These reviews generally resulted in less prescription of councils' roles and functions, but greater public accountability and tighter requirements for corporate planning and reporting.

2.3 Proposed legislative changes

State and territory governments have differing proposed changes to the legislative and policy frameworks under which local governments operate. The New South Wales Government has undertaken a review into its legislation and has made changes that seek to clarify roles and responsibilities of councillors, mayors, administrators and general managers; introduce new guiding principles for local government; improve governance of councils and professional development for councillors; expand on the framework for strategic business planning and reporting; prioritise community engagement and financial accountability; and streamline council administrative processes. The Western Australian and Victorian Governments are currently undertaking reviews of their local government legislation.



KEY FACTS

POPULATION (2017 Census):

23,401,892

AREA (UN 2006):

7,692,024 sq km

CAPITAL:

Canberra

CURRENCY:

Australian dollar (AUD)

HEAD OF STATE:

HM Queen Elizabeth II

GOVERNOR-GENERAL:

Sir Peter Cosgrove

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull

FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

constitutional monarchy

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:

bicameral

STATE STRUCTURE:

federal

LANGUAGE:

English (official)

NATIONAL ELECTIONS:

last: 2016, turnout: 91.0%; next: 2019

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2016):

representatives: 28.7; senators: 40.8%

LOCAL ELECTIONS:

vary from state to state

WOMEN COUNCILLORS (2017):

32.2%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2015/16:

5.7%

Table 2.1a Distribution of local government areas and population

State/territory	Local government areas	Population 2016 Census	Population 2017 estimate	% rural 2016
New South Wales	131	7,797,791	na	na
Queensland	77	4,883,739	na	na
South Australia	74	1,716,966	na	na
Tasmania	29	519,050	na	na
Victoria	79	6,244,227	na	na
Western Australia	137	2,567,788	na	na
Australian Capital Territory	1	406,403	na	na
Northern Territory	18	245,048	na	na
TOTAL	546	*23,401,892	24 511,800	<10.0

* Total includes institutional population
 Source: DIRDC communication with CLGF and Australian Bureau of Statistics^{2,3a}

2.4 National urban policy

The Australian Government released the Smart Cities Plan on 29 April 2016.^{2,2i} The Smart Cities Plan sets out a range of opportunities and challenges that cities face in Australia and proposes actions to address them. The Australian Government is implementing the Decentralisation Program which was launched April 2017. The Decentralisation Program aims to ensure that the benefits of national economic growth are not restricted to Australia’s major cities. Under the Decentralisation Program, the Government will consider business cases on proposed relocations and make decisions on relocations in 2018.

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government within the state

Australia has a total of 546 single-tiered local governments. Although local governments sometimes voluntarily come together to form regional organisations of councils, these do not form a separate tier of government, but provide a basis for councils to collaborate

in purchasing, joint delivery of services and advocacy before other levels of government. The size of Australian local governments varies from some Western Australian councils with less than 1,000 residents, to Brisbane City Council with a population of over one million.

3.2 Ministerial oversight

The responsible department of state is the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities^{2,3b} (DIRDC) which manages most federal local government programmes and provides policy advice to the minister. The minister is responsible for: allocating federal funding for local government, mostly via the state and territory governments^{2,3c-j}; producing an annual report on local government to be tabled in the federal parliament; and annual national awards recognising excellence in local government. Constitutional responsibility in Australia for local government areas (usually called councils) lies with the eight state and territory governments.

They manage their own systems of local government, each with legislation which confer on local government powers and responsibilities, including provisions for local elections. Seven of the eight states and territories have a separate tier of local government - the exception is the ACT, where the Territory government performs all local government functions. States and territories have ministers who are responsible for local government (although the formal titles vary), and who manage implementation of their local government legislation. They are each supported by a department which manages programmes to help councils achieve good governance and provides policy advice. Where there is a severe failure of governance in a council, a state or territory minister has authority to dissolve the council and appoint administrators to carry out some or all of the local government’s functions. Generally this will be accompanied by a public inquiry into the council, prior to a new council being elected.

3.3 Council types

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

4. ELECTIONS

4.1 Recent local elections

Local elections vary from state to state^{2a-h}; see Table 1c.

4.2 Voting system

The system of election for local councils varies from one state or territory to another. Table 1c below 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 by constituents, or indirectly by fellow councillors, and terms for both can vary from one to four years. Methods for electing councillors include preferential or single transferable voting, proportional representation and the first-past-the-post system. Enrolment and voting for local government elections include eligible Australian citizens 18 years and over who have lived at their present address for at least one month as a basis, with some local governments including variations for resident and non-resident electors.

Table 2.1b Women councillors and mayors 2005-2017

	2009-12		2013-16		2017-2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
All councillors	na	na	na	na	na	na
All female councillors	na	28.4	na	29.8	na	32.2
All male councillors	na	71.6	na	70.2	na	67.8
Total councillors	na	100.0	na	100.0	na	100.0
Chairpersons/mayors	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female mayors	na	na	na	na	na	na
Male mayors	na	na	na	na	na	na
Total mayors	na	na	100.0	na	na	100.0

Source: DIRDC communication with CLGF



Table 2.1c Local government systems by state/territory

Jurisdiction	Date of last local election	Turnout	Female representation after the last elections	Date of next election	Main legislation	Voting system used
Australian Capital Territory	No local government	No local government	No local government	No local government	No local government	Territory performs all local government functions
New South Wales	9 September 2016 2017 (newly amalgamated councils)	No data available following the 2016 election. Turnout in 2012 was 82.1%	No data available following the 2016 election. Following the 2012 election, 34.3% of councilors were women.	2020	New South Wales: Local Government Act 1993 ^{22b}	Every four years Property owners who pay rates on a property but do not live locally can apply to vote Preferential or proportional representation voting Mayors may be elected directly or indirectly Voting compulsory
Northern Territory	26 August 2017 except Palmerston City which was held on 17 March 2018 following a period under administration	No data available following the 2016 election. Turnout in 2012 was 70%	No data available following the 2016 election. Following the 2008 election 34% of councilors and 26% of mayors women	2021	Northern Territory: Local Government Act 2011 ^{22c}	Attendance voting supported by early, postal, absent and mobile polling Elections for all held on a Saturday in March every four years Exhaustive preferential voting Five municipal principal members elected directly plus one shire principal member Voting compulsory
Queensland	2016	No data available following the 2016 election. Turnout in 2012 was 100%	Following the 2016 election, 32.9% (165/502) councilors were women, down from 35% in 2012. In 2016, 20.8% (16/77) mayors were women, up from 18% in 2012	2020	Queensland: Local Government Act 2009 ^{22d}	Varies by local government – some conduct elections entirely by postal ballot Preferential or first-past-the-post voting Separate direct votes for councilors and for mayors; mayors elected using preferential voting Voting compulsory
South Australia	November 2014	No data available following the 2014 election. Turnout in 2013 was 33%	No data available following the 2016 election. Women were 28% of councilors and 21% of Mayors in 2009	November 2018	South Australia: Local Government Act 1999 ^{22e}	Elections held every four years in November Postal voting using proportional representation Residents, and owners and occupiers of ratable property, eligible to vote Voting not compulsory
Tasmania	14–28 October 2014	Election, turnout in 2014 was 57%	Following the 2014 election, 14% of councilors were women, down from 27% in 2010. 27% of mayors in 2014 were women.	September and October 2018	Tasmania: Local Government Act 1993 ^{22f}	Open to residents, land owners and occupiers Postal voting, using proportional representation Half of each council is elected every two years representing the entire council area, with councilors serving four-year terms. Mayors and deputy mayors are directly elected at every council election for a two-year term Voting not compulsory
Victoria	October 2016 (except for Greater Geelong City Council which is under administration; elections scheduled for October 2017)	No data available following the 2016 election, Turnout in 2012 was 72%	Following the 2016 election, 38.1% (241/637) of councilors were women, up from 30% in 2012. 40.5% (32/79) mayors in 2016 were women, up from 23% in 2012	October 2020	Victoria: Local Government Act 1989 ^{22g}	Elections held every four years Residents and ratepayers eligible to vote Preferential voting – but wards electing two or more councilors use proportional representation Councils may choose to conduct postal elections Elections are for councilors only, not mayors, who are elected from among councilors (except for City of Melbourne, where the mayor and deputy mayor are directly elected) Voting compulsory for residents aged 18-70; optional for those aged 70+
Western Australia	21 October 2017	Turnout in 2017 was 34.5, up from 33% in 2013	The number of women councilors after the 2017 election was unknown. Following the 2015 election, 34.3% of councilors were women, up from 28% in 2009, when 24% of Mayors were female.	October 2019	Western Australia: Local Government Act 1995 ^{22h}	Voting mostly postal Directly for councilors and for mayors – for councilors every two years; and for mayors every four years First-past-the-post voting Elections held third Saturday in October every two years Voting not compulsory

Source: DIRDC communication with CLGF



4.3 Elected representatives

Eligibility to stand for election as a councillor varies according to state/territory; similarly mayors may be directly or indirectly elected. The number of councillors per council normally varies from four to 15, although Brisbane City Council has 26 councillors and a Lord Mayor. Some mayors have considerable political and/or executive authority. Most serve part-time, with the exception of those in a few large cities.

4.4 Women's representation

In 2017, nationally, women accounted for 32.2% of councillors – up from 29.8% in 2015 and 28.4% in 2010. In response to a national strategy for women in local government introduced in 2009, council audits now include monitoring of gender equity and improved collection of gender-related data. However, the figures differ between jurisdictions, with Victoria having the highest proportion of women councillors with 38.1%.

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Legal requirement

State government legislation for local government usually provides for councils to consult with their communities on all important matters. The New South Wales Local Government Act 1993, for example, requires councils to consult with their communities on the provision of services, including the development of a council's long-term strategic plan. This document identifies the community's main priorities and its strategies for achieving these. In Victoria, analogous legislation provides community members with the right to make submissions on a range of council matters and activities, including the council plan and budget. Councils are also required to produce community plans which inform the council plan. These involve community consultations which in turn shape councils' service delivery and community infrastructure development priorities. Strong linkages have also been forged in Victoria between community planning and statutory land use planning to ensure development and transport infrastructure meets community needs and aspirations for environmental sustainability and wellbeing. The Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia have made special provision for councils serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These are known as 'land councils' and are recognised as local governing bodies for the purposes of federal funding, and many participate in state or territory local government associations. Normally, these land councils do not levy rates based on land-rate systems, but instead receive revenue from mining projects and other federal and state government grant programmes.

5.2 Implementation

In the Northern Territory, a network of local boards has been established by shire councils to enable them to take a systematic approach to community input on issues. Local boards are voluntary groups of community members which provide advice and input to shires on local issues and priorities, and may also play a role in organising local community activities.

5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

Local governments around Australia are increasingly using ICT to improve local community engagement. Examples include Wyndham City Council which won the 2017 National Award for Excellence in Local Government for their innovative approach in developing and delivering the WynLens—Visualization, Analysis and Modelling of a Holographic City project. The WynLens project enhances community engagement and improves planning outcomes by allowing residents to visualise local surroundings using interactive 3D and immersive landscapes. In developing WynLens, in partnership with the tertiary and private sectors, Wyndham City has used cutting-edge technology to improve its local community's understanding of planning and development proposals. A further example is the City of Melbourne where, to support consideration of changes to Macarthur Square, the city council has developed an online site for the community to provide their direct feedback, gain further information through a document library and timeline and access the latest information.

5.4 E-government

All levels of government in Australia, including local government, make extensive use of information and communications technology to deliver services and consult with communities. Most councils maintain websites through which constituents can: pay rates, fees and fines; access council publications; lodge complaints; and make submissions on planning and policy issues. For example, the South Australian city of Marion has an online mapping system with information about services. In Victoria, all councils have their own websites, but also participate in a Victorian portal called EasyBiz, which contains online forms for various local government services such as licences, permits and registrations. In the Northern Territory councils have provided a range of online mechanisms to enable constituents to make payments, and to facilitate other web-based interactions.

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6.1 National local government associations

At the national level, the state and territory associations have combined to form the Australian Local Government Association^{2.6a} (ALGA), which has its headquarters in Canberra. ALGA is recognised as the peak national body for local government. It represents local government on a wide range of federal/state ministerial councils, intergovernmental committees and advisory bodies. ALGA is a member of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and the Asia Pacific Regional Section of United Cities and Local Government (UCLG ASPAC). Also at the national level, the state and territory associations of professionals have combined to form LG Professionals. LG Professionals Australia represents the local government professionals, senior managers and emerging leaders.

6.2 Other local government associations

Each state and the Northern Territory has a local government association,^{2.6b-h} Membership of each association is voluntary, but almost all councils in Australia have chosen to be members of their state or territory association. The associations are funded by subscriptions from members, grants from state and territory governments, and fees for services, projects, research and publications. The local government associations for New South Wales and Victoria are incorporated bodies that are recognised by specific state legislation. In the other states and the Northern Territory they are recognised and incorporated under the primary piece of state or territory legislation regulating local government. At the state and territory level, discussions occur between local government ministers, senior local government officials and local government associations on matters of mutual concern. Some states make use of advisory boards. For example:

- Western Australia has a local government advisory board, a statutory body that provides advice to the minister for local government
- South Australia has a minister's state/local government forum which provides advice to the state government and the local government association
- Tasmania has a local government council chaired by the state premier
- All states engage with regional organisations of councils, which are voluntary groupings that involve collaborative partnerships between neighbouring councils in a particular region or area.



Table 2.2a Income and expenditure for local government 2015-16

Revenue by purpose	2015-16 (AU\$m)	Expenditure by purpose	2015-16 (AU\$m)
Centre-local transfers		General public services	6,017
Current grants and subsidies	3,519	Public order safety	861
		Education	191
Locally raised revenue		Health	422
Taxation revenue	16,620	Social security and welfare	1,745
Sales of goods and services	11,559	Housing and community amenities	8,284
Interest income	795	Recreation and culture	5,589
Other	9,627	Fuel and energy	18
		Agriculture, forestry and fishing	32
		Mining, manufacturing and construction	364
		Transport and communications	7,355
		Other economic affairs	1,247
		Public debit transactions	802
		Other	1,412
Total	42,120	TOTAL	34,339

Source: DIRDC communication with CLGF

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The primary forum for intergovernmental relations in Australia is the Council of Australian Governments²⁷ (COAG), which comprises the prime minister, state premiers, territory chief ministers, and the president of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). COAG initiates, develops and implements national policy reforms requiring cooperative action between the Australian, state/territory and local governments in economic, national security, social and environmental areas. In 2006, an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) establishing principles guiding intergovernmental relations on local government matters was signed by the Australian government, all state and territory governments and ALGA. The IGA establishes a framework within which services are to be funded and delivered to the community at the local level. Its key feature is in-principle agreement between governments that whenever responsibility is devolved to local government, local government will be consulted and the financial and other impacts taken into account. The IGA was reviewed in 2011.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

Councils are subject to extensive scrutiny of their operations by state and territory governments and the community. Typically, councils are required to prepare and publish detailed corporate and management plans, quarterly

reviews and annual reports. In some cases an updated corporate plan and draft budget must be publicly exhibited 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. States and territories have their own ombudsmen and anti-corruption tribunals which can investigate council irregularities. Local governments are also subject to the Australian Government Competition and Consumer Act 2010 and can be investigated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and equivalent state and territory bodies.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

9.1 Local government expenditure

In 2015-16 local government expenditure was 5.7% of total government expenditure, down from 8.4% in 2012/13, see table 2.2b.

Table 2.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2013-2017

	2012/13 actual (AU\$bn)	2013/14 actual (AU\$bn)	2014/15 actual (AU\$bn)	2015/16 estimated (AU\$bn)	2016/17 budgeted (AU\$bn)
Total government expenditure	na	na	na	600.8	na
Total local government expenditure	na	na	na	34.3	na
Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure	8.4%	na	na	5.7%	na

Source: Table 2.2.a and budget aggregates Australian government.^{2,9a}



The City of Canada Bay Council opened the entire council budget to citizen review and council agreed to accept their recommendations. The Council, in metropolitan Sydney, went well beyond the model of opening the process to any interested citizens. It engaged a mini-public forum using a deliberative approach, with the final recommendations developed through dialogue and deliberation rather than aggregating preferences through a vote. Australia pioneered and piloted attempts at gender budgeting from 1984 onwards, in response to calls from women's rights activists. Today, local governments continue to integrate their consideration of gender equity issues into their every-day provision of local government services and infrastructure policies and programmes.

9.3 Transfers

The Australian government provides substantial financial assistance to councils, through untied grants known as the Financial Assistance Grant Program and specific-purpose payments. The grants are the largest of these transfers, amounting to about AU\$2.4bn annually. They are made under the Australian Government Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995, and are directed through the states and territories. The Financial Assistance Grant Program amounts to about 10% of total local government revenue nationally, but make up in excess of half the revenue of some small and remote councils. The aggregate Financial Assistance Grant allocation for 2017-18 was approximately AU\$2.4bn. Funding under the Financial Assistance Grant Program is allocated to the states and territories on a per capita basis. Local government grants commissions in each jurisdiction then determine the distribution to councils, based on the national principles formulated under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995. These principles aim to provide a nationally consistent basis for distributing financial assistance grants to local government. They include horizontal equalisation, which seeks to equalise the capacity of councils to provide the average range, level and quality of services, taking account of differences in the expenditure between council areas to provide average services, as well as each council's capacity to raise revenue. 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 other principles include financial assistance being allocated to councils in a way which recognises the needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Specific-purpose payments and funding from other national government programmes are for specified projects or activities that councils commit to undertake.

9.4 Loans

In Australia, local government borrowing arrangements differ between jurisdictions and are subject to state and territory government policy and legislative frameworks. Some jurisdictions have implemented borrowing facilities to provide local governments within their jurisdiction with a cheaper source of funding.

9.5 Local authority staff

Local government staff are recruited and paid by the local government; national government staff are not deployed to local government. By law, local councils are required to have a chief executive officer or a general manager as the head of the employed council. Allowances and reimbursements paid to councillors are also paid directly by the local government. In Queensland salaries are paid to councillors, again directly by the local government. In New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland independent tribunals set allowances for mayors and councillors.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility

Although there are variations between the states and territories, councils typically have statutory responsibility for local infrastructure, health, water and sewerage amenities, community services including childcare, aged care, recreation, cultural and educational establishments and commercial establishments including parking, aerodromes, cemeteries and quarries. Members of the public pay for local government services either indirectly through taxes, or directly through fees for individual usage. Waste collection, local road maintenance, local libraries and parks are typically funded through taxes received by councils. Services that usually require direct payment include building development applications, access to council-owned swimming pools or registration of a pet. Where individuals pay directly, councils provide concessions to low-income residents and seniors.

10.2 ICT use in service delivery

There are many examples of councils using ICT to improve service delivery. Of particular note is Brisbane City Council who, along with Queensland Police, kept people informed of developments during the January 2011 floods via Twitter feeds and a Facebook page. Councils are exploring the benefits of new technologies including: CCTV; advanced business analytics; drones; smart meters; sensors and the Internet of Things; asset management, such as vehicle tracking; and smart lighting. An example of this

is Mackay Regional Council which has rolled out smart metering across its full water meter fleet. The information collected is being used to drive efficiencies, improve operations and transform interactions with customers. The project has deferred \$100 million in capital expenditure and reduced the forward price path of water to \$500 per annum per customer. Another example is the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council which has implemented smart lighting and CCTV to improve public safety and lighting. The solution installed LED smart lights with Adaptive Control and CCTV on new poles. This technology has reduced the incidence of graffiti and is improving the liveability of the town.

Three further examples of innovation and good practice include the Visit Golden Plains Shire Council's Smartphone application that features an interactive map of the region, including helpful visitor information and landmark images all designed to assist tourists in accessing information to find and enjoy the attractions and facilities using smartphone, iPad or android tablet. The Hills Shire Council is providing online tools to make it easier for local residents to comply with planning and building regulations and ultimately speeding up approval times. Through this work, the Hills Shire Council is providing an online tool that helps its residents comply by giving them real time evaluation as they interactively design the layout of their property. The City of Burnside has developed a modern, easy to use and efficient geospatial application which assists in monitoring, tracking and maintaining council assets. The application dubbed "BAM!" (Burnside Asset Mapper) is cross platform compatible and can be used on most modern devices including Windows, Android and iOS operating systems

10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Australia will present its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on its progress towards the 2030 Agenda at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2018. This will be used to share Australian experience and lessons learnt in areas of global significance, highlighting in particular the country's contribution to development and economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region. They will also showcase the many domestic initiatives which are contributing to Australia's prosperity and progress towards the 2030 Agenda.^{2,10a} Advocacy for the Sustainable Development Goals links the country in a global partnership to support the achievement of the goals in all countries.^{2,10b}





Australia is ensuring a coordinated whole-of-government approach to how it gives effect to the 2030 Agenda, and how it reports on progress. In general Australia's local governments support the needs of their local communities with services like waste collection, public recreation facilities, town planning, local road maintenance, and public libraries. Many of these services contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, in undertaking town planning, local governments contribute to the objectives of Goal 11 to make cities and communities more sustainable. Some individual councils have individually endorsed the SDGs. For example, Port Phillip council endorse, on behalf of their community a commitment on Implementation of the SDGs in Australia. The Australian Government is working with the Australian Local Government Association to showcase and promote local governments' contributions to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

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- 2.4d Queensland election commission www.ecq.qld.gov.au
- 2.4e South Australia election commission www.ecsa.sa.gov.au
- 2.4f Tasmania election commission www.electoral.tas.gov.au
- 2.4g Victoria election commission www.vec.vic.gov.au
- 2.4h Western Australia election commission www.elections.wa.gov.au
- 2.5 No reference for this section
- 2.6a Australian Local Government Association www.alga.asn.au
- 2.6b New South Wales Local Government and Shires Associations of New South Wales www.lgsa.org.au
- 2.6c Municipal Association of Victoria www.mav.asn.au
- 2.6d Local Government Association of Queensland www.lgaq.asn.au
- 2.6e Western Australian Local Government Association www.walga.asn.au
- 2.6f Local Government Association of South Australia www.lga.sa.gov.au
- 2.6g Local Government Association of Tasmania www.lgat.tas.gov.au
- 2.6h Local Government Association of the Northern Territory www.lgant.asn.au
- 2.7 Council of Australian Governments www.coag.gov.au
- 2.8 No reference for this section
- 2.9a Taking the figure of AU\$32.2 billion from table 2a and 382.6 billion from Table 1: Australian Government general government sector budget aggregate from budget statements 2014/5, 2015/16 and 2016/17 <http://budget.gov.au/2013-14/content/fbo/download/Consolidated.pdf>
- 2.9b Budget 2017-18 Government of Australia www.budget.gov.au/2017-18/content/glossies/overview/download/Budget2017-18-Overview.pdf
- 2.10a DFAT 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/development-issues/2030-agenda/Pages/default.aspx>
- 2.10b Port Phillip council report on the Sustainable Development Goals www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/UN_Sustainable_Development_Goals_2015_Report.pdf
- 2.11a UN statistics surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf>
- 2.11b Commonwealth Local Government Knowledge Hub www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub
- 2.11c UNDP HDR Australia country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/AUS>

Annex 2a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Australia

Services	Delivering authority			Remarks
	National	State	Local	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION				
Police	■	■		The Australian Federal Police deals with federal and international matters. Each state has its own police force. The fire service is a state responsibility, but local government takes responsibility for voluntary services The Australian Election Commission deals with federal government elections. States deal with their own and those of local authorities
Fire protection		■	■	
Civil protection		■		
Criminal justice		■		
Civil status register		■		
Statistical office	■	■		
Electoral register	■	■		
EDUCATION				
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)		■		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				
Family welfare services	■	■	■	Income support is provided by federal government
Welfare homes	■			
Social security	■			
PUBLIC HEALTH				
Primary care	■	■	■	Health standards are set at various levels of government (eg food safety) is covered by local government, whilst immunisation may be covered by federal government)
Hospitals		■		
Health protection		■		
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING				
Housing		■		
Town planning			■	
Regional planning	■	■	■	
TRANSPORT				
Roads	■	■	■	All spheres of government are responsible for roads Local governments own regional aerodromes, but they are governed by federal law
Transport		■	■	
Urban roads	■	■	■	
Urban rail		■	■	
Ports	■			
Airports	■			
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION				
Water and sanitation		■	■	All spheres of government are involved with environmental protection
Refuse collection and disposal		■	■	
Cemeteries and crematoria		■		
Slaughter-houses			■	
Environmental protection	■	■	■	
Consumer protection	■			
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS				
Theatres and concerts			■	
Museums and libraries			■	
Parks and open spaces			■	
Sports and leisure			■	
Religious facilities			■	
UTILITIES				
Gas services		■		Many utilities are the responsibility of the state: local government is responsible for water in some states.
District heating		■		
Water supply		■	■	
Electricity		■		
ECONOMIC				
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	■	■	■	All spheres of government participate in economic development
Local economic development/promotion			■	
Trade and industry	■			
Tourism	■	■	■	

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service