



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries



*Local Government
Act 1995 Review*
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT REVIEW ►► DELIVERING FOR THE COMMUNITY

Mandatory Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates

Draft for Consultation

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Preface

As part of the McGowan Government's commitment to transforming local government in WA, the *Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2019* introduces a mandatory code of conduct for council members, committee members and candidates. These reforms are intended to ensure that standards of behaviour are consistent between local governments and address community expectations.

This document outlines the proposed Code which will inform the drafting of regulations. This is contained in the grey boxes. The accompanying guidelines provide clarification and guidance in relation to compliance and enforcement of the Code and would be available on the Department's website.

The proposed Code and guidelines have been developed by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in consultation with representatives from the Public Sector Commission, the Ombudsman, the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and Local Government Professionals WA (LG Pro). The Department gratefully acknowledges the participation of these representatives.

The Department notes that the content of the Code does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the organisations or individuals that have been consulted.

Feedback is sought on the proposed Code and guidelines and associated matters.

A survey is available at www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/lgareview or you can provide your feedback to actreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au by **22 November 2019**.

Mandatory Code of Conduct

Preamble

The purpose of this Code of Conduct (Code) is to guide the decisions, actions and behaviours of council members, committee members and candidates running for election.

As an elected representative, council members govern the affairs and are responsible for the performance of their local government. To do this, council members must demonstrate professional and ethical behaviour to build and strengthen trust in their communities.

A person who has nominated to be a council member is also required to demonstrate professional and ethical behaviour during the election campaign.

In addition to carrying out the duties outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995*, council members and committee members must comply with the provisions in this Code of Conduct in carrying out their functions as public officials. It is the responsibility of council members, committee members and candidates to ensure that they are familiar with, and comply with, this Code at all times.

Guidelines

The Local Government Act requires that local governments adopt the Code within three months of the amendments taking effect. Until the Code is adopted, the model Code applies.

While local governments are not able to amend Part A or Part C, additional behaviours can be included in Part B that are not inconsistent with the Code.

In considering additional behaviours, the council may give consideration to behaviours that are not currently represented in the Code that it considers are important. This may include introducing a dress standard for members or use of technology, for example.

To adopt the Code, a resolution passed by an absolute majority is required. Once the Code is adopted, it must be published on the local government's official website.

Part A – Principles

Council members and candidates are expected to adhere to and promote and support the following principles by example. Adhering to these principles will ensure that council members and candidates can comply with the behaviours outlined in Part B or conduct as outlined in Part C. All behaviour should be considered against these principles, whether or not it is covered specifically in Part B or Part C.

Personal integrity

- 1.1 Act with care and diligence and participate in decision making in an honest, fair, impartial and timely manner, considering all relevant information.
- 1.2 Act with honesty, integrity and uphold the concept of natural justice.

- 1.3 Identify, declare and appropriately manage any conflicts of interest in the public interest and the interests of the Council including not accepting gifts that may give the appearance of a conflict of interest or an attempt to corruptly influence behaviour.
- 1.4 Uphold the law, and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust placed in council members.
- 1.5 Avoid damage to the reputation of the local government.
- 1.6 Not be impaired by mind affecting substances while performing official duties.

Relationships with others

- 1.7 Treat others with respect, courtesy and fairness.
- 1.8 Maintain and contribute to a harmonious, safe and productive work environment for all.
- 1.9 Respect and value diversity in the workplace and in the community.

Accountability

- 1.10 Base decisions on relevant and factually correct information and make decisions on merit and in accordance with statutory obligations and good governance.
- 1.11 Be open and accountable to the public, represent all constituents and make decisions in the public interest.

Guidelines

The principles outlined in Part A are overarching behaviours that council members, committee members and candidates must take into consideration in their role as public representatives, or potential public representatives.

All council members, committee members and candidates must familiarise themselves with the Code and Guidelines and any relevant policies the local governments have in place.

Council members are generally very active in their communities which may lead to conflicts of interests. To comply with this Code, those conflicts, or perceived conflicts, need to be managed appropriately. While a member may be confident of the integrity of their actions, how the relationship and actions may appear to others must be thought through.

There are many situations that council members, committee members and candidates might find themselves in that could lead to a breach of the Code. Members should seek further guidance and advice on specific situations whenever necessary.

Part B – Behaviour

Part B sets out the standards of behaviour which enable and empower council members to meet the principles outlined in Part A. Behaviour is expected to be managed at the local level by the local government, so Part B also deals with how complaints are to be managed.

Failure to comply with this Part may give rise to a complaint against a council member's conduct, followed by a subsequent investigation and possible corrective action by the local government. The emphasis should be on an educative role to establish sound working relationships and avoid repeated breaches, rather than punishment.

Personal integrity

- 2.1** Act in line with the principles outlined in this Code when performing official duties.
- 2.2** Attend and participate constructively in council meetings, briefings, relevant workshops and training opportunities.
- 2.3** Respect and comply with all council policies, procedures and resolutions.
- 2.4** Ensure professional behaviour is not compromised by the use of alcohol or drugs.
- 2.5** Use all forms of media, including social media, in a way that complies with this Code.

Relationships with others

- 2.6** Treat other council members, council employees and members of the public with courtesy, respect, honesty and fairness.
- 2.7** Do not bully or harass council staff, other council members or members of the public in any form, including social media.
- 2.8** Deal with the media in a positive, informative and appropriate manner in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995 and relevant local government policies.
- 2.9** While acting as a council member, do not:
 - i. use offensive or pejorative language in reference to another council member, council employee or member of the public; or
 - ii. disparage the character of any council member or employee, or impute dishonest or unethical motives to them in the performance of their duties.
- 2.10** When attending a council or committee meeting, do not:
 - i. behave in an abusive or threatening manner towards another council member or other person attending the meeting;
 - ii. make statements that the person knows, or could be reasonably expected to know, that are false or misleading; or
 - iii. repeatedly disrupt the meeting.
- 2.11** When attending a council or committee meeting:
 - i. comply with the local law that relates to conduct of people at council or committee meetings;

- ii. promptly comply with any direction given by the presiding member at that meeting; and
- iii. immediately cease any conduct that has been ruled out of order by the presiding member in accordance with the local government's local law.

2.12 Direct all requests for work or actions by council staff to the CEO or the CEO's nominated delegate.

Accountability

2.13 Make decisions honestly and impartially, considering all available information, legislation, policies and procedures.

2.14 Take responsibility for decisions and actions.

2.15 Abide by the decisions of council and publicly support the decisions even if of an alternative view.

2.16 Adhere to the principles in the:

- i. Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (WA);
- ii. Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA);
- iii. Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth); and
- iv. Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth).

Complaint management

2.17 Any person may make a complaint about a council member under this Part within three months of the alleged breach occurring.

2.18 A breach of this part does not include a matter:

- i. that is resolved by the Presiding Member during a meeting, or
- ii. where a council member complies with a request for remedial action in accordance with the relevant local law.

2.19 Complaints about an alleged breach should be made to the Mayor or President or the CEO of the local government or nominated delegate.

2.20 Complaints about an alleged breach by the Mayor or President should be made to the Deputy Mayor or President or a nominated delegate.

2.21 A complaint may be handled or managed in any manner that council deems appropriate for handling an alleged breach of this section. This includes investigation or dismissal of the complaint. This must be laid out in a council endorsed policy.

2.22 A complaint may be dismissed as trivial, vexatious or frivolous and accordingly not investigated.

Findings

2.23 Following an investigation in accordance with rule 2.21, the Council may, by resolution, make a finding of breach or no breach.

2.24 In accordance with rule 2.23, if a breach is found, the Council may, by resolution:

- i. take no action, or
- ii. prepare an action plan, developed in conjunction with the council member, to address future behaviour.

- 2.25** An action plan may include the requirement for the council member to undertake training, mediation or counselling or any other actions deemed appropriate by the Council.
- 2.26** The Council to which the member is elected, may decide, via resolution, to make an allegation of a rule of conduct breach under Part C:
- i. after the third finding of a breach of this Part by the same council member, or
 - ii. where the council member fails to comply with the action plan in accordance with sub-rule 2.24(ii).
- 2.27** A matter under sub-rule 2.26(i) cannot be alleged as a Part C breach unless an action plan has been developed in accordance with sub-rule 2.24(ii) for the previous two breaches.
- 2.28** Written notification of the outcome of an alleged breach under this section must be given to the council member and complainant.
- 2.29** A written record must be kept of all complaints made under this Part and how they were dealt with.

Guidelines

Local governments are responsible for taking action against alleged breaches under Part B.

Local governments are to have a policy on how complaints are going to be handled or managed.

Australian/New Zealand Standards for complaints resolution AS/NZs 10002:2018 provides a tool and framework to assist local governments with developing a policy.

Whether or not local governments choose to adopt the Standard is optional, however, the policy must provide a clear outline of the steps that will be taken once a complaint is submitted. The complaint process must also uphold the principles of natural justice.

There are a number of resources for effective complaints handling available on the Ombudsman WA's website www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

In developing a policy, the following key matters should be considered.

The complaints process

- The role of the council in the process.
- The extent to which independent persons are involved and their role in the process (complaint lodgement, investigation, findings). Local governments may decide to establish a regional or shared committee to deal with these complaints, for example.
- What types of remedial action are appropriate.
- The form of the action plan.

Process for making a complaint

- The process for a person to make a complaint needs to be clearly outlined in the policy, including whether complaints are required to be in a specific form.
- Complaints should be submitted in writing, with consideration given to a variety of methods, including email, letter or fax.
- The policy should also outline how the complaint is lodged, whether this is via a specific code of conduct complaint email address or a letter addressed to the Mayor or President (or alternative).
- The process should be simple and not act as a barrier to the raising of concerns about elected member behaviour.

Acknowledgement of the complaint

- The policy should include that complaints will be acknowledged and the timeframe for this.
- Complaints should be acknowledged in a timely manner. As part of the acknowledgement process, consideration may be given to providing information on how the complaint will be progressed. This may include providing the complainant with a copy of the complaint handling policy.

Responsiveness

- The policy should outline whether complaints are going to be addressed based on seriousness or impact of the allegation or on order of submission.
- Inclusion of an expected timeframe for the matter to be reviewed is also encouraged.

Action

- Complaints must be dealt with in an equitable, objective, timely and unbiased manner. The principle of natural justice should be applied.
- The policy needs to outline who will make the initial assessment of the complaint. This includes who will make the determination that the complaint is trivial, vexatious or frivolous or worthy of further investigation.
- The policy also needs to address the process for the investigation including:
 - giving adequate opportunity for a right of reply from both parties
 - if a breach is found, what are the actions that could be imposed by council.
- Attachment 1 provides further guidance on possible actions for breaches found against Part B.

Action plans

- Action plans are designed to provide council members with the opportunity to remedy their behaviour.
- The measures to stop the behaviour from continuing are not intended to be a punishment, rather a mechanism to prevent the behaviour from reoccurring.
- The Code requires that the action plan is prepared in conjunction with the relevant council member. This is designed to provide the council member with

the opportunity to be involved in matters such as the timing of meetings or training.

- While Council is required to give the council members the opportunity, not all council members will actively participate in the process.

What happens if agreement cannot be reached

- Circumstances may arise when a Council cannot agree on the outcome of an investigation, or whether an investigation is required to an alleged breach.
- In these situations, Council may decide to engage an independent person to:
 - review the complaint
 - investigate the complaint, or
 - make recommendations on appropriate actions
- The policy should address who will be engaged as an independent person. Local governments may consider sharing the services of an independent person.

Attachment 1 – possible actions for Part B breaches

Personal integrity		Possible actions
2.1	Act in line with the principles outlined in this Code when performing official duties.	Training
2.2	Attend and participate constructively in council meetings, briefings, relevant workshops and training opportunities.	Training Mediation
2.3	Respect and comply with all council policies, procedures and resolutions.	Training
2.4	Ensure professional behaviour is not compromised by the use of alcohol or drugs.	Counselling
2.5	Use all forms of media, including social media, in a way that complies with this Code.	Training
Relationships with others		
2.6	Treat other council members, council employees and members of the public with courtesy, respect, honesty and fairness.	Training Mediation Apology
2.7	Do not bully or harass council staff, other council members or members of the public in any form, including social media	Training Mediation Apology
2.8	Deal with the media in a positive, informative and appropriate manner in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> and relevant local government policies.	Training
2.9	While acting as a council member, do not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. use offensive or pejorative language in reference to another council member, council employee or member of the public; or ii. disparage the character of any council member or impute dishonest or unethical motives to them in the performance of their duties. 	Training Mediation Counselling Apology
2.10	When attending a council or committee meeting, do not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. behave in an abusive or threatening manner towards another council member or other person attending the meeting; ii. make statements that the person knows, or could be reasonably expected to know, that are false or misleading; or 	Training Mediation Counselling Apology

	iii. repeatedly disrupt the meeting.	
2.11	When attending a council or committee meeting: i. comply with the local law that relates to conduct of people at council or committee meetings; ii. promptly comply with any direction given by the presiding member at that meeting; and iii. immediately cease any conduct that has been ruled out of order by the presiding member in accordance with the local government's local law.	Training Mediation Counselling
2.12	Direct all requests for work or actions by council staff to the CEO or the CEO's nominated delegate.	Training
Accountability		
2.13	Make decisions honestly and impartially, considering all available information, legislation, policies and procedures.	Training
2.14	Take responsibility for decisions and actions.	Training Counselling
2.15	Abide by the decisions of council and publicly support the decisions even if of an alternative view.	Training
2.16	Adhere to the principles in the: i. <i>Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (WA)</i> ; ii. <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)</i> ; iii. <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i> ; and iv. <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i> .	Training Mediation

Part C – Rules of Conduct

Rules of conduct breaches are matters that:

- negatively affect the honest or impartial performance of a council member;
- involve a breach of trust placed in the council member; or
- involve the misuse of information or material.

Alleged breaches of this part can be referred to the Local Government Standards Panel (Standards Panel) in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act). A breach of this Part is a “minor breach”. In the event the Standards Panel makes a finding of breach against a council member, sanctions will be imposed in accordance with the Part 5 Division 9 of the Act.

Nothing in this part removes the obligations placed upon council members and employees (including the CEO) of the local government under the *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003*.

Guidelines

A breach of Part C is considered by the Standards Panel in accordance with the Act. The Standards Panel, which was established in 2007, has the authority to make binding decisions to resolve allegations of minor misconduct. The Standards Panel is independent of the Minister for Local Government and the department.

The process for complaints under Part C is outlined in the Act. Complaints in the first instance are directed to the complaints officer at the local government. The Act provides that the complaints officer is the CEO or another officer with delegated responsibility.

As the Panel does not have investigative powers, findings and decisions are made on the basis of the information it receives. To assist with understanding each Part C rule of conduct, the elements are outlined alongside each. For a finding of breach, the Standards Panel needs to be satisfied that it is more likely than not, (on the balance of probabilities) that a breach of each element has occurred.

Personal Integrity

<i>Misuse of local government resources</i>	Elements of Rule of Conduct
<p>a. resource is defined to mean tangible and intangible assets, services or other means of supporting the functions of local government, which are owned or paid for by the local government from public money.</p> <p>b. A person who is a council member must not either directly or indirectly use the resources of a local government —</p> <p>i. for the purpose of persuading electors to vote in a particular way at an election, referendum or other poll held under the Act, the <i>Electoral Act 1907</i> or the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>; or</p> <p>ii. for any purpose other than fulfilling the legal obligations and duties of the council member's office,</p> <p>unless authorised under the Act, by the council or the CEO to use the resources for that purpose.</p>	<p>(a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination;</p> <p>(b) the council member directly or indirectly used;</p> <p>(c) resources that belonged to the local government;</p> <p>(d) for the identified electoral purpose or any other purpose other than in their legal role as a council member;</p> <p>(e) without such purpose being authorised under the Act, by the council or the local government's CEO.</p>

<i>Securing personal advantage or disadvantaging others</i>	Elements of Rule of Conduct
<p>c. A person who is a council member must not make improper use of the person's office as a council member —</p> <p>i. to gain directly or indirectly an advantage for the person or any other person; or</p>	<p>(a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination;</p> <p>(b) by engaging in the conduct, the person the subject of the complaint made use of the office of a council member (in</p>

<p>ii. to cause detriment to the local government or any other person.</p> <p>d. Rule 3.3 does not apply to conduct that contravenes section 5.93 of the Act or <i>The Criminal Code</i> section 83.</p>	<p>the sense that he or she acted in their capacity as a council member, rather than in some other capacity);</p> <p>(c) when viewed objectively, such use was an improper use of the person's office as council member in that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. involved a breach of the standards of conduct that would be expected of a person in the position of a council member by reasonable persons with knowledge of the duties, powers and authority of the councillor and the circumstances of the case (by for example, an abuse of power or the doing of an act which the councillor knows or ought to have known that he or she had no authority to do); and ii. was so wrongful and inappropriate in the circumstances that it calls for the imposition of a penalty; and <p>(d) the person engaged in the conduct in the belief that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>[in the case of rule 3.3(i)]</i> an advantage (pecuniary or otherwise) would be gained directly or indirectly for the person or any other person; <u>or</u> ii. <i>[in the case of rule 3.3(ii)]</i> detriment (pecuniary or otherwise) would be suffered by the local government or another person; <p>(e) It is irrelevant whether advantage was actually gained or detriment suffered;</p> <p>(f) The conduct does not fall under section 5.93 of the Act: improper use of information (which would be a serious breach), or section 83 of the Criminal Code (which would be a crime).</p>
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Repeated breaches of Part B	Elements of Rule of Conduct
<p>e. A breach of Part B of the Code of Conduct is a minor breach if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. it occurs after the council member has been found to have committed 3 or more other breaches of Part B; or ii. the council member fails to comply with the action plan developed after a finding of inappropriate behaviour under Part B; <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. the Council to which the member is elected, decides, via resolution, to make an allegation of a rule of conduct breach under this Part. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member or candidate both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Standards Panel makes its determination; (b) the council has passed a resolution referring the matter to the Standards Panel; (c) in the case of (i) – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the person has been found to have breached Part B of the code of conduct on at least three occasions; ii. the behaviour the subject of this complaint occurred after a finding of inappropriate behaviour; iii. the person has engaged in behaviour that is a breach of Part B of the code of conduct; iv. an action plan is in place; or (d) In the case of (ii) – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. there was an action plan in place; ii. the action plan resulted from a previous finding of a breach of Part B; iii. the person has not complied with the action plan.

Relationships with employees

Prohibition against involvement in administration	Elements of Rule of Conduct
<p>3.7 A person who is a council member must not undertake a task that contributes to the administration of the local government unless authorised by the CEO to undertake that task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination; (b) the council member took on or was involved or participated in the performance, attempted performance, or part-performance, of a function or responsibility which under the

<p>3.8 Rule 3.7 does not apply to anything that a council member does as part of the deliberations at a council or committee meeting.</p>	<p>Act or by delegation it is for the local government’s CEO to perform or direct; and</p> <p>(c) such taking on, involvement or participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. contributed (for example, played a part in achieving) something; and ii. did not occur as anything the council member did as part of the deliberations at a council or committee meeting (which may include something the member did as part of their preparation for any such deliberation); and <p>(d) the local government’s CEO did not authorise such taking on, involvement or participation.</p>
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Relations with local government employees	Elements of Rule of Conduct
<p>3.9 In this rule —</p> <p>employee means a person as defined in section 5.36 of the Act and any person contracted to provide a service to the local government.</p> <p>3.10 A person who is a council member or candidate must not —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. direct or attempt to direct a person who is a local government employee to do or not to do anything in the person’s capacity as a local government employee; or ii. attempt to influence, by means of a threat or the promise of a reward, the conduct of a person who is a local government employee in the person’s capacity as a local government employee; or 	<p>Rule 3.10(i)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member or candidate both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination; (b) the council member or candidate gave or tried or made an effort to give a direction or an order or command; (c) to another person, who is an employee of the relevant local government; (d) to do or not to do something in the other person’s capacity as a local government employee; and (e) the direction or attempted direction was not part of anything that the person did as part of the deliberations at a council or committee meeting (which may include something he or she did as part of their preparation for any such deliberation).

iii. behave in an abusive or threatening manner towards any local government employee.

3.11 Rule 3.10(i) does not apply to anything that a council member does as part of the deliberations at a council or committee meeting.

3.12 If a person, in their capacity as a council member, is attending a council meeting, committee meeting or other organised event, other than at a meeting or part of a meeting that is closed to the public, the person must not, either orally, in writing or by any other means —

- i. make a statement that a local government employee is incompetent or dishonest; or
- ii. use offensive or objectionable expressions in reference to a local government employee.

3.13 Rule 3.12(i) does not apply to conduct that is unlawful under *The Criminal Code* Chapter XXXV.

Rule 3.10(ii)

- (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member or candidate both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination;
- (b) a council member or candidate tried or made an effort to affect, sway or produce an effect on;
- (c) the conduct of another person, who is an employee of the relevant local government, in that person's capacity as a local government employee; and
- (d) the council member or candidate's effort to affect, sway or produce an effect was carried out by means of —
 - (i) a threat by the person (for example, the council member's declaration of an intention to inflict punishment, pain or loss on, or to take any action detrimental or unpleasant to, the employee — or on someone, or to something, that the employee cares about — in retaliation for, or conditionally upon, some action or course), or
 - (ii) a promise or undertaking by the person to give the employee something having a value, or to do or not do something where the act or omission concerned has some value or advantage for or to the employee.

Rule 3.10(iii)

- (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member or candidate both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination;
- (b) the person behaved in a manner which was:
 - (i) abusive (for example, the council member uses insulting, disparaging belittling or derogatory language about or to the employee); or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) threatening (for example, the council member’s declaration of an intention to inflict punishment, pain or loss on, or to take any action detrimental or unpleasant to, the employee — or on someone, or to something, that the employee cares about — in retaliation for, or conditionally upon, some action or course); (c) the behaviour is directed towards a local government employee. <p>Rule 3.12(i)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination; (b) the council member attended a council meeting, committee meeting or other organised event in their capacity as a council member; (c) the council member either verbally, in writing or by some other means, made a statement (for example, a communication or declaration in speech or writing setting forth facts, particulars; etc.); and (d) viewed objectively, the council member’s statement (or a sufficiently clear inference from the words used) was that an employee of the council member’s local government was incompetent or dishonest. (e) Chapter XXXV of <i>The Criminal Code</i> does not apply. <p>Rule 3.12(ii)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (b) the council member attended a council meeting, committee meeting or other organised event in their capacity as a council member; (b) the council member either verbally, in writing or by some other means, used an expression (for example, any word, phrase or form of speech) which it is more likely than not that a member or members of the public present heard or otherwise became aware of; (c) the expression was an offensive or objectionable expression (for example, an expression that is likely to cause offence or displeasure and is insulting); and (d) the expression was an offensive or objectionable expression in reference to an identified employee of the council member's local government.
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Accountability

<i>Unauthorised disclosure of information</i>	Elements of Rule of Conduct
<p>3.14 In this rule —</p> <p>closed meeting means a council or committee meeting, or a part of a council or committee meeting, that is closed to members of the public under section 5.23(2) of the Act;</p> <p>confidential document means a document, or that part of a document, marked by the CEO or a nominated delegate to clearly show that the information is not to be disclosed;</p>	<p>Rule 3.15(i)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination; (b) the council member disclosed information to someone who at the time was not also a council member of the same local government; and (c) the disclosed information was information the disclosing council member derived from a document that was marked by the relevant local government's CEO, or at the CEO's direction, to clearly show that the information in the document was not to be disclosed; and

<p><i>non-confidential document</i> means a document that is not a confidential document or is not marked confidential.</p> <p>3.15 A person who is a council member must not disclose —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. information that the council member derived from a confidential document; or ii. information that the council member acquired at a closed meeting other than information derived from a non-confidential document; or iii. personal information as defined in the <i>Freedom of Information Act 1992</i>. <p>3.16 Sub-rule (3.15) does not prevent a person who is a council member from disclosing information —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. at a closed meeting; or ii. to the extent specified by the council and subject to such other conditions as the council determines; or iii. that is already in the public domain; or iv. to an officer of the Department; or v. to the Minister; or vi. to a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice; or vii. if the disclosure is required or permitted by law. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (d) the disclosed information was not information already in the public domain (for example, it was not generally available to all persons) at the time of the disclosure by the disclosing council member, and the disclosure did not occur in any of the ways identified in rule 3.16. <p>Rule 3.15(ii)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination; (b) a council member disclosed information to someone who at the time was not also a council member of the same local government; and (c) the disclosed information was information the disclosing council member acquired at a council or committee meeting, or a part of a council or committee meeting, that was closed to members of the public under section 5.23(2) of the Act; and (d) the disclosing council member did not derive the disclosed information from a non-confidential document (that is, a document that was <i>not</i> marked by the local government's CEO, or at the CEO's direction, to clearly show that the information in it was not to be disclosed); and (e) the disclosed information was not information already in the public domain (for example, it was not generally available to all persons) at the time of the disclosure by the disclosing council member, and the disclosure did not occur in any of the ways identified in rule 3.16.
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Rule 3.15(iii)

- (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination;
- (b) the council member disclosed information to someone who at the time was not also a council member of the same local government; and
- (c) the disclosed information was personal information as defined in the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (for example, name, date of birth, address, or a reference to an identification number or other identifying particular such as a fingerprint or body sample).
- (d) the disclosed information was not information already in the public domain (for example, it was not generally available to all persons) at the time of the disclosure by the disclosing council member, and the disclosure did not occur in any of the ways identified in rule 3.16.

Freedom of Information Act 1992 defines personal information as:

information or an opinion, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual, whether living or dead —

- (a) whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information or opinion; or
- (b) who can be identified by reference to an identification number or other identifying particular such as a fingerprint, retina print or body sample.

Disclosure of interest	Elements of Rule of Conduct
<p>3.17 In this rule —</p> <p>interest means a material interest that could, or could reasonably be perceived to, adversely affect the impartiality of the person having the interest.</p> <p>3.18 A person who is a council member and who has an interest in any matter to be discussed at a council or committee meeting attended by the member must disclose the nature of the interest —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. in a written notice given to the CEO before the meeting; or ii. at the meeting immediately before the matter is discussed. <p>3.19 Rule 3.18 does not apply to an interest referred to in section 5.60 of the Act.</p> <p>3.20 Rule 3.18 does not apply if —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. a person who is a council member fails to disclose an interest because the person did not know he or she had an interest in the matter; or ii. a person who is a council member fails to disclose an interest because the person did not know the matter in which he or she had an interest would be discussed at the meeting and the person disclosed the interest as soon as possible after the discussion began. <p>3.21 If, under sub-rule (3.18)(i), a person who is a council member discloses an interest in a written notice given to the CEO before a meeting then —</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the person the subject of the complaint was a council member both at the time of the conduct and the time when the Panel makes its determination; (b) subject to rule 3.19, the person had a private or personal interest in a matter that is more likely than not a conflict of interest or a bias (apparent or real) that does adversely affect, or might adversely affect the council member’s impartiality in considering the matter, and includes an interest arising from kinship, friendship, membership of an association, or another circumstance; (c) the member attended the council or committee meeting concerned and was present when the matter under consideration came before the meeting and was discussed; (d) the member did not disclose the nature of the relevant interest in the matter in either of the two ways required by Rule 3.18(i) or 3.18(ii); (e) Rule 3.20 does not apply.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. before the meeting the CEO is to cause the notice to be given to the person who is to preside at the meeting; andii. at the meeting the person presiding is to bring the notice and its contents to the attention of the persons present immediately before a matter to which the disclosure relates is discussed. <p>3.22 If —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. under sub-rule (3.18)(ii) or (3.20)(ii) a person's interest in a matter is disclosed at a meeting; orii. under sub-rule (3.21)(ii) notice of a person's interest in a matter is brought to the attention of the persons present at a meeting, <p>the nature of the interest is to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.</p>	
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Code of Conduct survey

As part of the McGowan Government's commitment to transforming local government in WA, the *Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2019* introduces a mandatory code of conduct (Code) for all council members, committee members and candidates in local government elections.

These reforms are intended to ensure that standards of behaviour are consistent between local governments and address community expectations.

The proposed Code will inform the drafting of regulations. This will be accompanied by guidelines that provides clarification and guidance in relation to compliance and enforcement with the Code.

This survey is intended to provide the Government with feedback regarding the proposed the content of the Code.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

1. Who are you completing this survey on behalf of?
 - a. Yourself
 - b. An organisation, including a local government, peak body, community organisation or a business
2. What is the name of that organisation?
3. What is your name?
4. What best describes your relationship to local government?
 - a. Resident or ratepayer
 - b. Staff member
 - c. Council member (includes Mayor or President)
 - d. Survey responses are provided on behalf of a local government (council endorsed)
 - e. Peak body
 - f. State Government agency
 - g. Community body
 - h. Other (please specify)
5. What best describes your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
 - d. Not applicable/the survey responses are provided on behalf of an organisation
6. What is your age?
 - a. Under 18
 - b. 18-24
 - c. 25-34
 - d. 35-44
 - e. 45-54
 - f. 55-64
 - g. 65+
 - h. Not applicable/the survey responses are provided on behalf of an organisation
7. Which local government do you interact with most?

8. Do you wish for your response to this survey to be confidential?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
9. What is your email address?
10. Have you previously completed a survey or provided a submission regarding the review of the *Local Government Act 1995*?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
11. If no, what were your reasons for not previously providing your views to inform the Local Government Act review?
 - a. I was not aware of the Local Government Act review
 - b. I was not interested in providing my views
 - c. I did not have time to provide my views
 - d. Other (please specify)

Part A - Principles

Council members, committee members and candidates are expected to adhere to and promote and support the following principles by example.

Adhering to these principles will ensure that council members and candidates can comply with the behaviours outlined in Part B or conduct as outlined in Part C. all behaviour should be considered against these principles, whether or not it is covered specifically in Part B or Part C.

12. Please indicate your support of the following ***Personal Integrity Principles***

1.1 Act with care and diligence and participate in decision making in an honest, fair, impartial and timely manner, considering all relevant information.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

1.2 Act with honesty, integrity and uphold the concept of natural justice.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

1.3 Identify, declare and appropriately manage any conflicts of interest in the public interest and interests of the Council including not accepting gifts that may give the appearance of a conflict of interest or an attempt to corruptly influence behaviour.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

1.4 Uphold the law, and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust placed in council members.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

1.5 Avoid damage to the reputation of the local government.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

1.6 Not be impaired by mind effecting substances while performing official duties.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

Do you have any comments on these principles?

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13. Please indicate your support of the following **Relationships With Others Principles**

1.7 Treat others with respect, courtesy and fairness.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

1.8 Maintain and contribute to a harmonious, safe and productive work environment for all.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

1.9 Respect and value diversity in the workplace and in the community.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

Do you have any comments on these principles?

14. Please indicate your support of the following **Accountability Principles**

1.10 Base decisions on relevant and factually correct information and make decisions on merit and in accordance with statutory obligations and good governance.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

1.11 Be open and accountable to the public, represent all constituents and make decisions in the public.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

Do you have any comments on these principles?

15. Should any additional principles be incorporated in Part A?

Part B – Behaviour

Part B sets out the standards of behaviour which enable and empower council members to meet the principles outlined in Part A. Behaviour is expected to be managed at the local level by the local government, so Part B also deals with how complaints are to be managed.

Failure to comply with this Part may give rise to a complaint against a council member’s conduct, followed by a subsequent investigation and possible corrective action by the local government. The emphasis should be on an educative role to establish sound working relationships and avoid repeated breaches, rather than punishment.

16. Please indicate your support for the following ***Personal Integrity Behaviours***.

2.1 Act in line with the principles outlined in this Code when performing official duties.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.2 Attend and participate constructively in council meetings, briefings, relevant workshops and training opportunities.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.3 Respect and comply with all council policies, procedures and resolutions.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.4 Ensure professional behaviour is not compromised by the use of alcohol or drugs.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.5 Use all forms of media, including social media, in a way that complies with this Code.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

Do you have any comments on these behaviours?

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17. Please indicate your support for the following ***Relationships with Others Behaviours***.

2.6 Treat other council members, council employees and members of the public with courtesy, respect, honesty and fairness.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.7 Do not bully or harass council staff, other council members or members of the public in any form, including social media.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.8 Deal with the media in a positive, informative and appropriate manner in accordance with the Local Government Act 1995 and relevant local government policies.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.9 While acting as a council member, do not:

- (i) Use offensive or pejorative language in reference to another council member, council employee or member of the public;
or
- (ii) Disparage the character of any council member or council employee or impute dishonest or unethical motives to them in the performance of their duties.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.10 When attending a council or committee meeting, do not:

- (i) Behave in an abusive or threatening manner towards another council member or other person attending the meeting;

- (ii) Make statements that the person knows, or could be reasonably expected to know, that are false or misleading;
- Or
- (iii) Repeatedly disrupt the meeting

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.11 When attending a council or committee meeting:

- (i) Comply with the local law that relates to conduct of people at council or committee meetings;
- (ii) Promptly comply with any direction given by the presiding member at that meeting; and
- (iii) Immediately cease any conduct that has been ruled out of order by the presiding member in accordance with the local government's local law.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.12 Direct all requests for work or actions by council staff to the CEO or the CEO's nominated delegate.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

Do you have any comments on these behaviours?

18. Please indicate your support for the following **Accountability Behaviours**.

2.13 Make decisions honestly and impartially, considering all available information, legislation, policies and procedures.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.14 Take responsibility for decisions and actions.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.15 Abide by the decisions of council and publicly support the decisions even if of an alternative view.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

2.16 Adhere to the principles in the:

- (i) *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984(WA)*;
- (ii) *Equal Opportunity Act 1984(WA)*;
- (iii) *Racial Discrimination Act 1975(Cth)*; and
- (iv) *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*.

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very supportive

Do you have any comments on these behaviours?

19. Should any additional behaviours be incorporated in Part B?

20. Part B of the Code includes a complaint management process. Should this part include a time period in which complaints must be lodged after the alleged breach occurred?

- No time period
- 1 month
- 3 months
- 6 months
- Other (please specify)

21. Who is the best person for Part B complaints to be directed to?

- Mayor or President
- Deputy Mayor or President
- Presiding member
- Chief Executive Officer
- Nominated local government employee

- Other (please specify)

22. What actions are appropriate for councils to impose if a Part B breach is found?

- Apology
- Training
- Mediation
- Counselling
- Other (please specify)

23. Do you have any suggestions for specific actions that could be incorporated into the guidelines?

24. Should recurrent breaches of behaviour be referred to the Local Government Standards Panel?

- Yes
- No

Please provide a reason(s) for your answer

25. Should Council be required to develop an action plan and give the council member an opportunity to resolve their behaviour before a third complaint is referred to the Standards Panel under Part C?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

26. How beneficial would it be for local governments to engage an independent person to assist with the review of complaints?

- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not so useful
- Not at all useful
- Other (please specify)

27. What should happen if a council cannot agree on an investigation or course of action following an alleged breach of Part B?

- An independent person should be engaged to conduct a review
- The complaint should be dismissed
- The Mayor or President makes the decision
- The CEO makes the decision
- Other (please specify)

Part C – Rules of Conduct

Rules of conduct breaches are matters that:

- **Negatively affect the honest or impartial performance of a council member;**
- **Involve a breach of trust placed in the council member; or**
- **Involve the misuse of information or material.**

Alleged breaches of this part can be referred to the Local Government Standards Panel (Standards Panel) in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act). A breach of this Part is a “minor breach”.

36. Do you have any comments or feedback on Part C?

Guidelines

Guidelines have been prepared to accompany the Code the Conduct. The guidelines are intended to provide clarification and guidance in relation to complain and enforcement.

37.Are the guidelines a useful tool to accompany the Code?

- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not so useful
- Not at all useful

Please specify why

38.Do you have any suggestions for additional inclusions in the guidelines?