



Local Government Finance Professionals

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31 July 2019

Hon Adem Somyurek MP  
Minister for Local Government  
RE: Local Government Act Review Secretariat  
C/o Local Government Victoria,  
PO Box 500, Melbourne VIC 3002

Email: [local.government@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:local.government@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Dear Minister

### **Local Government Bill 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the final consultative phase of the Local Government Bill 2019.

FinPro has made contributions to each stage of the Local Government Bill consultation and would like to firstly confirm that we stand by the recommendations that we have already made (following consultation with our members) and detailed in our previous submissions. We have also assisted this reform process by proactively consulting our members at each stage and kept our members informed, in-line with our key objective to provide advocacy for FinPro members on financial issues affecting the sector. Therefore, the matters raised below and in our previous submissions have been written on behalf of the members of FinPro.

With respect to the proposed changes outlined in your document "Local Government Bill – A reform proposal" we have no specific comments or concerns on the new matters raised, but do want to ensure the submissions are reviewed and feedback provided by the Government in relation to the 2018 proposed changes.

We were somewhat surprised by the addition of this "fifth" stage of consultation and further, particularly disappointed with the limited timeframe to lodge a submission but do thank the Minister for extending the original date of submissions, so that we and others could provide a meaningful submission after consultation.

The delay of implementing the Local Government Bill will cause some considerable pain to our members. Our main concerns center on the timeframes (and transitional provisions) in relation to the implementation of the Act and particularly how the transition processes will apply to the following key Planning documents;

- Community Vision
- Strategic planning principles
- Council Plan
- Financial Plan (10 yr Plan)
- Asset Plan (10 Yr Plan)
- Revenue and Rating Plan (4 Year focus) and the
- Budget (including 4 Yr focus)

With Council elections due in October 2020 and several of the above documents likely to have critical timeframes linked to the elections (e.g. by 30 June post the election) we implore you make satisfactory transition provisions to ensure councils can effectively consult/engage/ integrate/implement these key planning documents.

In the paper you have pledged that you will assist councils with application of the new legislation and provide direct support the form of detailed Regulations, guidelines and model policies. FinPro has a track record of working with and supporting your Department with preparation of models (Accounts and Budget) and guideline documents. We are also keen to be involved in future work however, without a reasonable transition program, the risk of implementing an ineffective suite of planning documents is high.

We also implore you to provide councils, particularly rural and regional, with additional resources to implement the key planning documents. This could be undertaken with direct assistance to councils and additional resources in your local government office to implement the planning suite of document guidelines & regulations.



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Thank you for this opportunity to once again take part in the review of the proposed Act as our membership appreciates the opportunity given to be engaged in this process. Please feel free to contact me at [bthomas@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto:bthomas@hepburn.vic.gov.au), or our Executive Officer, Gabrielle Gordon, at [gabrielle@finpro.org.au](mailto:gabrielle@finpro.org.au) or 0400 114 015.

Yours sincerely

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