

Circular to Councils

Subject/title	Consultation on Councillor Conduct Reforms
Circular Details	Circular No 26-08 / 12 June 2026 / A1005891
Previous Circular	<u>Circular 24-17 Councillor conduct and meeting practices – a discussion paper</u>
Who should read this	Councillors / General Managers / Council Governance Staff
Contact	Strategic Reform Team / Council Governance Team / 02 4428 4100 / olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Response to OLG

What's new or changing?

- The Office of Local Government (OLG) is inviting feedback from the Local Government sector on the next steps of the NSW Government's proposed reforms to the regulation of councillor conduct.
- The proposed changes are detailed in a Councillor Conduct Reform Policy Statement and a draft Model Code of Conduct for Councillors, which are available on OLG's website: www.olg.nsw.gov.au.

What will this mean for council?

- Under the proposed new framework, the handling of complaints against councillors will be centralised through OLG ensuring a more consistent, efficient and independent process. This will allow trivial complaints to be dismissed early, ensure serious matters receive timely attention, and remove councils from investigating complaints about their own councillors.
- A new Privileges Committee of experienced mayors and councillors will assess less serious complaints of unsatisfactory councillor conduct, while serious misconduct will be investigated by OLG and, where appropriate, referred to the Land and Environment Court.

- As part of the reforms, the existing Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW will be split into two with a dedicated code for councillors and a separate code for council staff, delegates and committee members. Breaches of the councillor code will be managed under the new conduct framework.
- The new councillor code has been designed to reflect the political nature of elected councillor roles, support the implied freedom of political communication, simplify conflict-of-interest rules, and remove provisions that could be misused or “weaponised” in complaints.
- The reforms will also modernise how councillors disclose their personal interests, aligning requirements with those applying to Members of NSW Parliament.

Key points

- The proposed changes respond to growing concerns that the current Councillor Conduct Framework has been overwhelmed by trivial and vexatious complaints leading to delays in complaint resolution and undermining confidence in local democracy.
- The changes were foreshadowed in the September 2024 discussion paper, ‘Councillor Conduct and Meeting Practices - A New Framework’. There was broad support for the reforms outlined in the discussion paper.
- The proposed new framework will be finalised following public consultation before legislation is introduced to Parliament.

Where to go for further information

- The Councillor Conduct Reform Policy Statement and the Model Code of Conduct for Councillors are available on the [Councillor Conduct Framework Reform](#) webpage on the Office of Local Government’s website.
- Information about how to make a submission is also available on the [Councillor Conduct Framework Reform](#) webpage.
- For more information, contact OLG by telephone on 02 4428 4100 or by email at olg@olg.nsw.gov.au. Questions about the Councillor Conduct Reform Policy Statement should be directed to the Strategic Reform Team and questions about the Model Code of Conduct for Councillors to the Council Governance Team.



Brett Whitworth PSM
Deputy Secretary, Local Government