



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Legislative Council Support Encouraged for Proposed Code of Conduct Amendments**

The Local Government Association of Tasmania has been disappointed with the debate on the Local Government (Code of Conduct) Bill that has been occurring in the Legislative Council, particularly the micro rather than strategic focus around some of the amendments.

"These amendments have been driven by the Local Government sector, developed through extensive consultation over a period of years, and subject to formal consideration at council meetings and at the LGAT General Meeting," says LGAT Acting President, Mayor Daryl Quilliam.

"The Local Government Association believes the Bill addresses the issues the sector has raised including: the difficulties faced by local Code of Conduct Panels; the limited sanctions and enforcement powers; the inability for the Standards Panel to dismiss frivolous and vexatious complaints; and the difficulties faced by LGAT, as a member body, in administering the Standards Panel that deals with complaints and applies sanctions."

"The amendments represent a range of improvements to the workability and strength of the Code of Conduct provisions in the *Local Government Act*, as well as embedding voluntary improvements undertaken by the sector, such as the adoption of a Model Code of Conduct."

One of the amendments proposed aims to remove all flexibility for councils in relation to determining what behaviour is expected of elected members, and the supporting council policies to be implemented. "Having a single, high-level and generic Code of Conduct will make enforcement even more difficult than is currently experienced," says Mayor Quilliam.

There is already a high degree of consistency prescribed in relation to the Code of Conduct but the Local Government sector strongly believes there is benefit in ensuring newly-formed councils have conversations about expected behaviours, and that they collectively agree supporting policies around matters such as remuneration of expenses, gifts and benefits, and council representation. If there is no connection between the Code and such policies, breaches will not be enforceable.

"We urge the Legislative Council to pass these long fought for legislative amendments to support improved ability to deal with genuine Code of Conduct issues at the Local Government level," says Mayor Quilliam.

**For media enquiries, please contact  
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