

FACT SHEET

Local Government Amendment (Electoral Reforms) Bill 2026

This Bill supports the Local Government Electoral Bill 2026 by:

- repealing existing local government electoral provisions from the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (General) Regulations 2025*; and
- introducing a number of important electoral-adjacent reforms which will be administered under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

These reforms, consistent with the Government's *Local Government Priority Reform Program 2024 – 2026*, will lift standards of governance, transparency, and accountability in Tasmania's local government sector.

Caretaker provisions

The Bill includes Tasmania's first statutory caretaker scheme for local government elections – introducing prohibited decisions for councils during the election period (from the notice of election to declaration of the poll). These include:

- Decisions relating to the employment (including appointment, remuneration or dismissal) of the general manager;
- Entering tenders or contracts of a value greater than \$100 000; and
- Use council resources in a way which may benefit one or more candidates.

Prohibited decisions do not include any decision bound by a statutory timeframe. A Council can also apply to the Minister for approval to make a decision that may otherwise be prohibited, if they consider it in the public interest to do so.

Managing councillor interests

The Bill enhances the current framework for the management of the personal interests of elected members. This includes preparation of Personal Interest Returns (PIR) upon election, and annually thereafter. PIRs are to be kept by the council's general manager. A summary return will be published, which removes personal information such as residential addresses and monetary values.

Petition signatures

Consistent with previously agreed reforms to the Local Government Act, the Bill increases the thresholds for elector signatures for petitions for public meetings and elector polls from 5% or 1000 electors (whichever is the greater), to:

- 10% of electors for a petition for a public meeting;

- 20% of electors for a petition for an elector poll.

This change recognises the significant resourcing implications required on councils for holding elector polls in particular should only be applied where there is sufficient support across a significant proportion of the municipality.

Pre-nomination information

The Bill will require prospective candidates who are not continuing councillors to participate in a pre-nomination information course. The course would be approved by the Director of Local Government and likely take the form of a short video on the basics of being a councillor.

Councillor leave for members standing for Parliament

To avoid perceived or actual conflicts, Bill provides that a sitting councillor who nominates as a candidate for an election for State or Federal Parliament is taken to be on leave from the office of councillor during the period commencing on the issue of the writ for the election and ending at the close of poll for the election.