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Media Statement

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Statement Released: 22-Mar-2007
Portfolio: Local Government

New local government disciplinary system to be introduced

22/3/07

A new system for dealing with complaints of improper behaviour by elected local government members will soon be introduced after the Local Government (Official Conduct) Amendment Bill 2005 passed through the Upper House of State Parliament last night.

Local Government Minister Ljiljanna Ravlich said the new system would provide a disciplinary process for complaints about the conduct of elected members.

"The power to deal with the misconduct of individual councillors is an important part of this legislation. Previously the only remedy was to suspend the entire council," Ms Ravlich said.

"The new system will not only provide more effective disciplinary measures, but will protect the interests of individual councillors who consistently do the right thing.

"I thank the WA Local Government Association, Local Government Managers Australia (WA) and local government for their support of the introduction of these new laws."

Key features of the new system include:

- a uniform Code of Conduct for elected members;
- the referral of serious breaches such as contraventions of the Local Government Act 1995 or Regulations to the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT), which will have strong powers to suspend or disqualify an elected member;
- the appointment of a complaints officer and the establishment of a standards panel consisting of people not directly involved in the local government to hear complaints about minor breaches such as contraventions of the new Code of Conduct; and
- a standards panel, which will deal with minor breaches and will have the power to issue penalties such as public censure, public apology or an order to undertake training.

The legislation is expected to be operational in time for the October 20 local government elections.

Minister's office - 9213 6800

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