

Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 016

Submission By: Isaac Regional Council

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12 December 2025

Amanda Cavill
Committee Secretary
Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee
Queensland Parliament
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

RE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EMPOWERING COUNCILS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2025

Dear Ms Cavill

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to deliberations by the Queensland Parliament's Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee regarding the *Local Government (Empowering Councils) and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*.

Isaac Regional Council discussed the matter at its Ordinary Meeting on 11 December 2025 and is generally in favour of the proposed amendments, with two exceptions:

- 1. Councillors Nominating to Queensland Parliament:** Queensland local government has a long-held position that councillors should be free to nominate for State or Federal Parliament without the need to resign as a councillor. Isaac Council strongly opposes moves by this Bill to change that longstanding position.

For reasons not known, the proposed changes will introduce different standards for councillors nominating for election to State and Federal Parliament. Although the fixed timing of both local and Queensland elections will now see many State Parliament nominations made in the first year of the local government quadrennium (meaning a council has a choice as to whether a by-election need be held to fill a vacancy), it is still expected that these proposed changes will increase the likelihood of by-elections as a councillor vacancy will occur upon nomination rather than being triggered only by successful election of the councillor to Queensland Parliament.

Isaac Council has separately voted in a Special Meeting of the Local Government Association of Queensland to oppose this proposed change.

- 2. Senior Executive Officer Appointment Panels:** Council understands the intent of the proposed change and recognises the return to provisions that existed in the *Local Government Act 2009* from 2012. Councillors sitting on recruitment (and other) panels is not uncommon practice at Isaac Regional Council, but it has always been a voluntary choice by all involved, with the Chief Executive Officer retaining ultimate (statutory) responsibility for appointment, employment/performance management, discipline and termination (if

necessary). It is not a huge stretch to anticipate some confusion (or worse) where an employment relationship is being managed by more than one person.

To maintain the intent of the proposed changes, but safeguard against unintended consequences, Isaac proposes some alternatives:

- a. That opt-out options are provided for the councillor panel members enabling them to manage situations where conflict of interest, or time pressures, or personal preference might see them not wish to be compelled to participate (or it is better that they didn't).
- b. We contend that councillors' choice of alternate panel member need not necessarily be another councillor and might instead be a recruitment agent, community member or staff member (from the host council or elsewhere) of the councillor's choosing.
- c. The intent of s196.3 of the *Local Government Act 2009* (i.e. unitary employer role for CEO of all staff including senior executives) should be retained with the CEO being the chair of recruitment panels and the "appointer" of any senior executive positions that are the subject of these changes.

Outside of the matters raised above, Isaac Council is generally supportive of the other proposed changes and looks forward to passage into law and the roll-out of departmental training around provisions, particularly including returned conflict of interest provisions.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important process.

Yours faithfully



GALE DENDLE
Chief Executive Officer