

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

Submission No: 068

Submission By: Kath Down

From: Kath Down [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 19 January 2026 5:33 PM
To: Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee
Subject: Inquiry into Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Committee Secretary
Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
By email: lgsbcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

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

I am Kath Down, President and Founder of Save Our Southern Gold Coast. With extensive experience working in the community and addressing issues involving the Gold Coast City Council, I am writing to submit my thoughts on the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025.

While I support the Bill's objective to reduce unnecessary regulations and enhance operations for smaller councils, I am concerned that several proposed changes would significantly weaken integrity and accountability within the local government framework, which could undermine public confidence. Here are my key concerns regarding the Bill:

1. Retention of Material Personal Interest: While it's essential to maintain material personal interest as a statutory trigger for mandatory exclusion, integrity risks exist below this threshold that must be managed.
2. Risks of Repeal: The removal of mechanisms to address sub-material conflicts increases the likelihood that integrity risks will be handled informally, compromising transparency and decision-making processes.
3. Removal of Conduct Breach Category: Eliminating the conduct breach category under section 150K of the LGA may increase the efficiency of the Office of the Independent Assessor in handling serious matters. However, it will not promote public confidence and may lead to an increase in complaints to the CCC that currently reassure complainants that issues have been addressed. This gap leaves behaviours falling short of "misconduct" unregulated, undermining public trust.
4. Changes to Mandatory Training Requirements: The proposed changes to reduce mandatory training for councillors are concerning. Continuous professional development is crucial to maintain standards and knowledge of legislative requirements, and allowing returning councillors to bypass training increases the risk of knowledge gaps and poor decision-making.

5. Appointment of Senior Executive Employees by Panel: While the Bill aims to formalise recruitment processes for senior executives, it risks blurring the lines between strategic leadership and operational management. Inadequate safeguards against undue influence, conflicts of interest, and partisanship could arise from allowing Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral majority decision-making on appointments. This could undermine the independence and effectiveness of public servants.

6. Complementary Integrity Structures: To strengthen the Bill's objectives, it is vital to introduce independent ethics panels to oversee decisions, particularly in light of the increased autonomy granted to councillors.

The proposed changes, particularly in the context of conflict of interest management and senior executive appointments, could exacerbate corruption risks without appropriate checks and balances. Upholding public confidence in the integrity of local government must remain a priority.

Thank you for considering my submission. I hope it contributes positively to the ongoing discussion about the future of local governance in Queensland. I am open to discussing this further during any public hearings related to the Bill.

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Best Regards
Kath Down



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