



Speech By  
**Nikki Boyd**


**MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS**

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## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Local Government, Sustainability**

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (2.40 pm): We appreciate the critical role that local governments play in supporting the safety, livability and prosperity of local communities right across the state. Over time, sustainability pressures on councils have increased and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have added to these challenges. While the Palaszczuk government is responsible for monitoring the overall health of Queensland's local government sector, we also play a critical role in supporting councils to ensure strong and sustainable communities into the future. That is why I was pleased recently to launch the *Local government sustainability framework discussion paper* in Cairns with our state's Far North Queensland councils. I table a copy of the discussion paper for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Government report, dated October 2021, titled 'Local government sustainability framework: Discussion paper' [1801](#).

All of Queensland's 77 councils face unique financial service delivery and community need circumstances. The challenge of ensuring local government sustainability is an important issue for all councils and the Palaszczuk government. It was demonstrated through the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 17 of 2020-21 which raised concerns about local government financial sustainability, rating 24 out of the state's 77 councils as having a higher risk of sustainability issues in the short to medium term. The report recommends that we consider broadening the view of sustainability to include other elements such as governance, compliance and asset management and consider developing new financial sustainability ratios for councils that consider the different sizes, services and circumstances of various councils. This paper does just that.

The diversity of local government means that no single solution or approach will address the sustainability challenges faced by many local governments. To address this, the proposed sustainability framework is one that is holistic, tailored and relevant. Councils are impacted by a range of factors that affect their long-term sustainability. This includes size and location, population, the ability to raise or increase their own source revenue, governance frameworks and an increasing requirement to fill service delivery gaps to meet community expectations.

The proposal in this framework will also see new sustainability ratios and benchmarks introduced. We know one size does not fit all, so this framework works by grouping councils on populations and establishing relevant benchmarks reflecting what is achievable for each group. It will provide greater insight into the challenges faced by the sector which will support the development of more tailored and relevant solutions. Financial and asset sustainability ratios are expanded from three to eight which will include benchmarks that will provide councils with more relevant and council-specific information, but we have a vision to have business-ready councils as well today and into the future that enable livable communities to grow and prosper by focusing on the principles of foundations, infrastructure and outlook.

The sustainability framework includes revised ratios that will be implemented during 2022. The financial management guideline which sets out the agreed financial and asset ratios will be released in early 2022 and taking effect for the 2022-23 financial year reporting. A phased transition will be implemented to support councils to adequately meet their obligations under the new reporting requirements. Our department will work with councils to develop training and guidance materials to support the implementation of the agreed financial and asset sustainability ratios. This paper covers off this context and more and welcomes feedback from stakeholders until Friday, 12 November 2021. I take this opportunity to encourage stakeholders to put forward their views to achieve the best model possible. After 29 years in local government, CEO Greg Hallam has been at the helm of the Local Government Association in Queensland. I join with the minister, the Deputy Premier, in acknowledging the tremendous contribution to all levels of government for his almost three decades and wish him well in his future endeavours.

Our mayors and local councillors across the state are making a sterling effort in demonstrating leadership to get our communities vaccinated. We know the best possible way to protect the life that you love is to get vaxed. I acknowledge and commend the wonderful work of our local government sector in promoting the increased vaccination rates right throughout the communities. In the lead is Goondiwindi Regional Council and I give a special shout-out to Mayor Lawrence Springborg. There is definitely a lack of leadership on the opposition side of the House since his departure. I acknowledge the great work that he has been doing in promoting vaccination in his community.

*(Time expired)*