

7 August 2026

Office of Local Government
Locked Bag 3015
Nowra NSW 2541

Submitted via email: olg@olg.nsw.gov.au

Re: Submission – Councillor Conduct Framework Reforms

Dear Office of Local Government

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the *Councillor Conduct Framework Reform*. This submission has been prepared with the input and support of our member councils but should be considered draft until it is formally endorsed by the NSROC Board.

The Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) members are the eight councils in the northern Sydney area: Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Ryde, and Willoughby. NSROC brings these councils together to work on projects and common goals to create solutions that benefit not just individual communities, but the entire region. NSROC member councils service an area of 639km² with a population of 662,281 as of 2026 which extends from the Hawkesbury River in the north to Sydney Harbour in the south, west to Meadowbank on the Parramatta River.

NSROC member councils support the aims of the reforms to set clearer standards and strengthen accountability. To be effective, the reform will require adequate resourcing, clear statutory thresholds, procedural fairness safeguards and transparent reporting.

Removing councils (including General Managers) from the direct handling and assessment of councillor conduct complaints is supported. This will significantly reduce the real or perceived conflict of interest and relieve administrative pressure on council staff. The proposed centralisation of complaints through OLG should result in a more independent and consistent process.

Funding Model

Appropriate resourcing will be critical to the effective implementation of the reform. OLG must be resourced to triage complaints quickly otherwise the process may centralise delay rather than resolve it.

The paper proposes cost recovery, with councils contributing to complaint management costs, particularly Privileges Committee costs, while OLG's core regulatory functions would not be recovered from councils. The model should be transparent, predictable, and equitable, and should avoid imposing disproportionate costs on councils with low complaint volumes. Further, the funding model should not shift costs from OLG to local councils. Further consultation on the funding model is warranted prior to finalisation.

Service Standards

The framework should include expected timeframes for complaint acknowledgement, preliminary assessment, triage, referral, investigation, draft findings, final decision, and closure. The current Model Procedures include specific procedural timeframes in several areas, including referral to a conduct reviewer within 21 days and preliminary assessment within 28 days. Comparable service expectations and performance reporting should be included in the new framework.

NSROC member councils would welcome the opportunity to continue to work with OLG to refine the reforms. For any further information, please contact Dr Meg Montgomery, NSROC Executive Director on 0401 640 823 or mmontgomery@lanecove.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Meg Montgomery

Executive Director

Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils