

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS REFERENCE GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Preamble

Local Government has benefited from a high degree of co-operation and consensus in managing employment relations. The Local Government State Award was made by the consent of the employers represented by Local Government New South Wales and the three local government unions - the United Services Union, the Development and Environmental Professionals' Association and the Local Government Engineers Association of NSW - in late 1991 to apply from 1992 and a significant and dramatic changes were made to employment in the industry. Similar dramatic changes are anticipated in the amalgamation process.

Variations to that Award have been made by consent of the parties since 1992. The amalgamation of councils will involve dramatic changes to employment as the merged entities are developed and the importance of preserving this consensual approach to employment matters is essential and is reflected in the establishment of this Employment Matters Reference Group to provide appropriate advice to Government.

2. Purpose of the Employment Matters Reference Group

The primary purpose of the Employment Matters Reference Group is to identify and advise on matters impacting on the statutory and policy framework governing employment by councils. In particular, the Employment Matters Reference Group may provide advice on:

- matters impacting on the statutory and policy framework governing employment by councils including any issues arising from merger implementation;
- any proposed amendments to the *Local Government Act 1993* or *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*;
- any matters as requested by the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government (the Chief Executive); and
- any other matters agreed by the Employment Matters Reference Group.

3. Membership

The Employment Matters Reference Group is to be made up of representatives of the following bodies:

- Local Government New South Wales;
- the United Services Union;
- the Local Government Engineers Association of NSW ; and
- the Development and Environmental Professionals' Association.

Any member of the Employment Matters Reference Group may put forward a matter for consideration within the scope of these Terms of Reference.

The Chief Executive and/or his or her nominee may attend Employment Matters Reference Group meetings and submit matters for consideration at meetings that fall within the scope of these Terms of Reference but will not exercise voting rights on any proposals to provide advice.

4. Responsibilities of Members

Members of the Employment Matters Reference Group are expected to:

- contribute the time needed to prepare or review meeting papers;
- maintain confidentiality of business papers and discussions within meetings;
- provide expert advice in local government employment matters including any issues arising from merger implementation;
- participate in meetings by expressing opinions, applying sound, evidence-based analytical skills, objectivity and judgement; and
- provide fairness, courtesy, and due consideration to all views and opinions expressed within the Employment Matters Reference Group.

5. Reporting

The Employment Matters Reference Group is to provide advice to the Chief Executive with the consensus of all members of the Group.

6. Administrative arrangements

6.1 Meetings

The Employment Matters Reference Group will meet at the request of the Chief Executive or by agreement with the Chief Executive.

Agenda items for discussion at meetings are to be submitted to the Chief Executive prior to the meeting.

6.2 Attendance at meetings and quorums

At least one representative of an employee and employer organisation, must be in attendance for a meeting to proceed.

While attendance in person at meetings is preferable, members may attend by telephone or by video conference where necessary and feasible.

6.3 Remuneration and expenses

The costs incurred by members in attending meetings shall be covered by that member's organisation.

6.4 Confidentiality and media

No media comments will be made by a member of the Employment Matters Reference Group on business before the Group including any discussions, papers or communications.

All documents and oral briefings are to be kept in confidence unless stated otherwise. Recommendations provided to the Chief Executive may be made public with the agreement of all members of the Group.

6.5 Dissolution

The Employment Matters Reference Group may be dissolved at the discretion of the Chief Executive and upon the Chief Executive giving notice to members of the Group that it is dissolved.