

Local government pronouncements guidance note

Application

Type of audit and assurance work:

These instructions apply to financial statements and schedules prepared pursuant to Chapter 13, Part 3, Division 2 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act)*:

- general purpose financial report (GPFR)
- special purpose financial Report (SPFR) for business activities declared by Council
- Special Schedule 'Permissible income for general rates'.

Types of entities:

- local and county councils (councils)
- joint organisations (JOs)
- council entity¹.

Instructions

ASA 250 '*Considerations of laws and regulations in an audit of a financial report*' notes that the objectives of the auditor are:

- a) *To obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding compliance with the provisions of those laws and regulations generally recognised to have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial report;*
- b) *To perform specified audit procedures to help identify instances of non-compliance with other laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial report; and*
- c) *To respond appropriately to identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations identified during the audit.*

Audit teams can use this publication in identifying pronouncements issued by the Office of Local Government (OLG) within the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (the department) that may affect the audit of the financial statements. This publication does not consider or identify other laws and regulations that could be relevant to councils.

Objective

This publication lists and provides an overview of OLG circulars and guidelines ('pronouncements') currently in force, issued up to and including 15 May 2026, that are relevant to the financial statements and may impact the audit of a council's / JO's financial statements and schedules. This publication is not a substitute for a detailed understanding of the requirements of relevant pronouncements.

Background

The OLG publishes the following relevant information on their website:

- [guidelines and policy resources](#), which includes:
 - Mandatory and section 23A Guidelines and Codes: under section 23A of the *Local Government Act 1993* ('LGA'), the Secretary of the department may prepare, adopt or vary guidelines relating to the exercise of any council / JO functions. Section 23A(3) of the LGA requires Councils to 'take these guidelines into consideration before exercising any of its functions'
 - Practice Notes and other best practice guidelines on a range of topics to support councils to carry out their functions in line with best practice approaches.
- [circulars](#) comprise of announcements by OLG on various matters – including updates on laws and regulations which apply to the local government sector. Some of these 'circulars' relate to the release of 'guidelines, codes or practice notes' by OLG, while others do not.

¹ Section 415(5) of the LG Act defines council entity as:

- (a) a partnership, trust, corporation, joint venture, syndicate or other body (whether or not incorporated) that a council has formed or participated in forming or has acquired a controlling interest in, other than an entity of a class prescribed by the regulations, or
- (b) any other entity of a class prescribed by the regulations.

How do the documents in this publication relate with those in the above two web pages?

- this publication features selected pronouncements from the ‘guidelines, codes and practice notes’ and the ‘circulars’ pages, where they have potential relevance to the audit of the financial statements
- refer to the Legend, which indicates the nature of the pronouncement, and whether the document is featured on the OLG’s [guidelines and policy resources webpage](#).

Documentation

This publication can be used as a basis for documenting work performed in relation to compliance with OLG pronouncements.

Councils, JOs and Audit Service Providers can access this publication from the Audit Office [website](#).

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May 2026

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Items - Legend	Details – Legend (second column)
Red: Issued under section 23A of the LGA, or mandatory under other legislative and/or regulatory framework	Light grey: also published on the ' guidelines and policy resources ' page
Grey: Optional (guidance, resource, checklists or templates)	
Blue-grey: Reports and other resources	

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
Financial/annual reporting	
<p>Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting 2025-26</p> <p>Circular 25-16 End of Year Reporting Requirements</p> <p>Circular 25-15 Annual Reporting of Labour Statistics</p> <p>Council Circular - GC154 - 2025-26 Financial Assistance Grants (FA Grants) – Advance Payment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribes the format of council’s financial statements for 2025–26, including joint organisations, as approved by the Office of Local Government. • Updates the end of year financial reporting information for 2024–25. This should be returned by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 29 August 2025 - Financial Assistance Grants general return – 31 October 2025 – Financial Statements and FDR – 28 November 2025 - The National Local Roads Return – 30 November 2025 - Annual Report. • Annexures 1 and 2 provides information to help councils and joint organisations (JOs) prepare their 2024–25 financial statements and FDR. • Councils or JOs that require an extension to lodge their financial statements should submit these to OLG by 17 October 2025. • Councils can access and download the following via the OLG website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting 2024-25 – FDR 2024-25, Financial Assistance Grant returns and Permissible Income Returns via the Council portal – the 2024-25 Annual Report Checklist – 2025-26 Calendar of Compliance. • Advises that Wednesday, 4 December 2024 has been chosen as the “relevant day” for councils to report on their labour statistics in their annual reports under section 217 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021. • Advises councils that the Commonwealth Government has announced an advance payment of the preliminary FY 2025-26 Financial Assistance (FA) Grants, representing approximately 50% of the amount councils are entitled to. The advance payment allocations have been determined on the basis of the allocations for FY 2024-25. The NSW Grants Commission is yet to determine allocations for the 2025-26 financial year. • The advance payment amount will be paid to councils immediately and the remaining balance will be paid in quarterly instalments during 2025-26. The first quarterly instalment is expected to be paid to councils in mid-August 2025, with subsequent instalments in November 2025, February 2026 and May 2026. • Further adjustments to the remaining payment will take into account:

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular GC 153 '2024-25 Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) - advance payment'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the determination by the Commonwealth Treasurer of the final adjustments for FY 2024-25 - the Local Government Grants Commission's (the Commission) final recommendations for FY 2025-26 <p>The Commission will advise councils of their final recommendations after the Commonwealth advises the amount of the final adjustment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Federal Government has announced the advance payment of the preliminary 2024-25 FA Grants will represent approximately 85% of the amount council is entitled to. - further adjustments to the remaining payments will take into account the determination by the Commonwealth Treasurer of the final adjustments for 2023-24 and the Grants Commission's recommendations for 2024-25 • the advance payment amount, as set out in the schedule to the Circular, is expected to be paid to Councils in mid-August 2024, with subsequent instalments in November 2024, February 2025, and May 2025 (this is in contrast with the 2023-24 FAGs advance payment, which was paid to Councils in full on 27 June 2023). All councils will be advised by letter of individual councils' estimated entitlements for 2024-25 FA Grants.
<p>Circular 22-28 'Annual Report and Annual Performance Statement Checklists'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that the annual report checklist has updated for councils and an annual performance statement checklist has been updated for joint organisations. • Councils and JOs can use the checklists to ensure that their annual report / performance statement contains all the information required under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>, the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and other relevant legislation and guidelines.
<p>Special purpose financial statements</p>	
<p>'Pricing and Costing for Council Business - A Guide to Competitive Neutrality' (Published July 1997)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps councils prepare the special purpose financial statements for Declared Business Activities required by the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting (the Code). This Guide is quoted in the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice as one of the basis of preparation for the Special Purpose Financial Statements (see page 4 of the Code). • Helps councils apply the principle of competitive neutrality. The principle is part of a national competition policy, applied by government businesses at all levels throughout Australia. • Sets out the minimum compliance requirements and includes areas that councils are encouraged to adopt the principle. • Applies to council business activities (excluding non-business and non-profit activities).
<p>Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects</p>	
<p>Circular '22-02 New guidelines covering section 358 applications and Public Private Partnerships (PPP)'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that the new PPP Guidelines have been released. • The revised PPP Guidelines are issued pursuant to section 400C of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> and require councils to comprehensively address the rationale for the proposed PPP

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
Public Private Partnership Guidelines 2022	<p>projects. The guidelines require councils to consult widely with their communities and encourage them to carefully consider alternatives. Guidelines issued pursuant to section 400C are mandatory guidelines that councils must comply with.</p>
<p>Formation of corporations or other entities</p>	
<p>Circular '22-02 New guidelines covering section 358 applications and Public Private Partnerships (PPP)' Formation of Corporations and Entities (Section 358) Guideline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The circular advises councils that the new section 358 guidelines have been released. • The new section 358 guidelines replace previous guidance in Circular 07-49. The new guidelines have been issued pursuant to section 23A of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> to provide councils with a better understanding of the processes and factors to consider before and when making an application to the Minister under section 358 to form or participate in the formation of a corporation or other entity. Under section 358(4) of the LGA, 'Entity' means any partnership, trust, joint venture, syndicate or other body (whether or not incorporated), but does not include any such entity that is of a class prescribed by the regulations as not being within this definition. • Guidelines issued pursuant to section 23A of the LGA.
<p>Joint Organisation Implementation Guidelines (May 2018)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSW Government established joint organisations under the Local Government Act 1993 in 2018. The OLG prepared a range of materials – including this booklet - to support new joint organisations (JO) and their member councils as they commence operation. This booklet provides a snapshot of the legislative context for joint organisations, how to establish governance arrangements, how to recruit staff for a JO, and outlines links to other relevant resources and support.
<p>Capital expenditure</p>	
<p>Capital Expenditure Guidelines December 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under section 23A of the LGA. • Helps councils prepare and review certain capital expenditure projects, before committing to capital projects. • Requires councils to undertake capital expenditure reviews for 'non-exempt projects' exceeding the greater of 10 per cent of the council's ordinary rates revenue or \$1 million (GST exclusive). • Imposes additional requirements for non-exempt capital projects expected to exceed \$10 million (GST exclusive).
<p>Tendering and procurement</p>	
<p>Circular 24-02 'Minor Works contract form for infrastructure delivery for councils'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that NSW Public Works developed the Minor Works 21 Local Government (MW21-LG) Contract that is a plain English, cooperative, and collaborative form of contract, to support the NSW local government sector in delivering infrastructure. • The MW21-LG Contract is tailored for the NSW local government sector to document and manage construction contracts with an estimated value of up to \$2 million. • Use of a standard MW21-LG Contract offers the following benefits for councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – it allows for clear and consistent allocation of risks – it reduces costs to councils and contractors – a standard approach makes it easier for council staff in the delivery of projects

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 23-16 'Regulation amendments to protect the employment of waste workers'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it provides a standard form of contract across NSW local and state government sectors - it incorporates changes in legislation and is regularly reviewed and updated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments have been made to the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (the Regulation) to strengthen employment protections where councils tender for domestic or other waste management services • Section 173 of the Regulation has been amended to require tender submissions for the performance of domestic or other waste management services to contain an undertaking that the tenderer will ensure that current employees (whether of the council or the current contractor) will be offered employment to continue to provide the service, and for anyone who accepts the offer of employment the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - employment will be on at least the same terms as the individual's current employment, and - employment will be taken to be a continuation of the individual's current employment with no loss of entitlements, and - tenderer will pay an annual increase in the individual's base rate pay in accordance with the applicable industrial instrument or the Local Government (State) Award if there is no applicable instrument.
<p>Circular 22-40 'Amendments to the tendering provisions of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and consultation of the development of new procurement guidelines for councils'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that amendments have been made to the tendering provisions of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 to reduce red tape and to update them to reflect the increased use of electronic tendering by councils. Part 7 of the Regulation deals with tendering. • The amendments (sl-2023-101 and sl-2023-677): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - will give effect to a recommendation by the Audit Office and will support councils to achieve greater efficiencies in their procurement, to reflect the increased use of electronic tendering and that comprehensive and updated guidance on effective procurement practices be published - allow decisions to decline to accept all tenders to be made under delegation. However, decisions to decline to accept all tenders and to enter into negotiations in relation to the subject matter of the tender, must still be made by a resolution of the council to ensure transparency and accountability • OLG is also developing comprehensive new procurement guidelines to complement the new regulations.
<p>Circular 22-17 'Increase in tendering threshold for natural disaster response and recovery related contracts'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 has been amended to prescribe a tendering threshold of \$500k for contracts entered into by councils for the purpose of responding to, or recovering from, a declared natural disaster within 12 months of the declaration of the natural disaster (refer to section 170A of the regulations). • The amendment means that councils are not required to tender prior to entering into a contract with a value of less than \$500k where the contract is:

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 18-12 'Management of unsolicited proposals received by councils'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - primarily for the purpose of response to or recovery from a 'declared natural disaster', and - entered into within 12 months after the date on which the natural disaster is declared. • The phrase, 'declared natural disaster', is defined in the Regulation to mean a natural disaster that has been declared in relation to the area of a council by either a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural Disaster Declaration for the purposes of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements jointly administered by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories, or - declaration under section 33 of the <i>State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989</i>. • Encourages councils seeking to adopt their own unsolicited proposal guidelines to consider using the 'Unsolicited Proposals Guide for Submission and Assessment' for NSW Government agencies as the model framework.
<p>Councillor expenses and facilities</p>	
<p>Circular 22-04 'Payment of councillor superannuation'</p> <p>Circular 17-17 'Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy - Better Practice Template'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that following an amendment to the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> in 2021 that councils may make payments as a contribution to a superannuation account nominated by their councillors, starting from the financial year commencing on 1 July 2022. • Superannuation contribution payments for councillors is optional and is at each council's discretion. • Where a council resolves to make superannuation contribution payments for its councillors, the amount of the payment is to be the amount the council would have been required to contribute under the <i>Commonwealth Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992</i> as superannuation if the councillors were employees of the council. • As of 1 July 2022, the superannuation guarantee rate will be 10.5 per cent. The rate will increase by half a per cent each year until 1 July 2025 when it reaches 12 per cent. • The superannuation contribution payment is to be paid at the same intervals as the annual fee is paid to councillors. • Advises councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of the new template councils can use to prepare their own policies, which Councils can amend to suit local needs and circumstances - that under section 252 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>, a Councillors Expenses and Facilities Policy must be adopted within 12 months of the commencement of the new council term and be made publicly available on the Council's website.
<p>Councillor Expenses and Facilities Guidelines 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidelines help councils develop, implement and review their policies on the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities to mayors and councillors • The guidelines have been prepared under section 23A of the LGA.
<p>Budget controls</p>	

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 26-01 'Release of Quarterly Budget Review Statement Data Return Templates'</p> <p>Circular 25-22 'Release of Quarterly Budget Review Statement Data Return Templates'</p> <p>Circular 25-17 'Quarterly Budget Review Statement Guidelines'</p> <p>Quarterly Budget Review Statement Guidelines (2025 version)</p> <p>How to read the QBRS Fact Sheet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that the 2025-26 Quarter 2 QBRS data return is available on the council portal. • Councils are required to report the Q2 QBRS under the new Guidelines by no later than 28 February 2026 • The QBRS reporting requirements outlined in the Quarterly Budget Review Statement Guidelines for Local Government (the Guidelines) are mandatory including the use of standardised QBRS reporting templates to be presented to councillors. • Advises that the 2025-26 Quarter 1 QBRS data return is available on the council portal. • The mandatory reporting commences for the first quarter ending 30 September 2025. Councils are required to commence reporting the 1st quarter QBRS under the new Guidelines by no later than 30 November 2025. • The QBRS Report is required to be tabled at a council meeting prior to submitting to OLG and must include the Responsible Accounting Officer's statement. • The Guidelines have been issued under section 203(3) of the Local Government (General Regulation) 2021 (LG Regulation) and are mandatory for all NSW councils, county councils and joint organisations. • The Guidelines establish the mandatory and standardised requirements included in a Quarterly Budget Review Statement (QBRS) presented to the councillors at a council meeting • The new 2025 Guidelines introduce the following new requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - standardised reporting templates and a mandate to report at fund level to ensure the governing body and community can easily view how each fund is operating on its own merit - for councils to provide OLG with a full copy of QBRS documents and an electronic QBRS data return throughout the financial year • Councils are required to commence reporting the 1st quarter QBRS under the new Guidelines by no later than 30 November 2025.
Asset management	
<p>Circular 26-04 Advice to councils on transfer of Crown roads to councils</p> <p>Crown Roads Policy</p> <p>Guideline – administration of Roads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies the policy on the transfer of Crown roads to council. • Under the Crown Lands Administration of Crown Roads Policy (Policy) and Guidelines, if a council (including previous councils where amalgamated) approves, or has approved, a development application (DA) that requires a Crown road for access without the prior approval of the department, the department may transfer the road to council, regardless of whether the council agrees to the transfer. However, it is the practice of the department to consult with the affected council before processing a Crown road transfer. • The department is advising councils to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - require applicants for all DAs that rely on Crown roads to obtain Landowners consent from the department before the DA is determined. - assess the road condition and location as part of the DA process. Councils can then condition the DA consent to

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 26-03 Council-led Affordable Housing on Operational Land in NSW Guide for Council-Led Affordable Housing on Operational Land in NSW</p>	<p>require the developer to upgrade and maintain the road to council standards, or for them to make developer contributions if they have a contributions plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises of the release of the Guide for Council-Led Affordable Housing on Operational Land in NSW (the guide). • The guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provides councils with the knowledge and resources necessary to consider the use of identified surplus operational land to meet affordable housing demand in their local government area. It covers the identification of suitable under initiatives on council-- utilised land, management of affordable housing owned land at every stage, accessing grants and support mechanisms available to councils, and showcasing real world success stories through council led affordable housing projects on operational land. – has been developed in response to requests from councils for additional information in using government land for housing – aligns with the National Housing Accord and the shared objectives of many councils to enhance housing supply and affordability at the local level – has been developed by OLG in consultation with key stakeholders across NSW Government agencies, local government and the community housing sector.
<p>Circular 19-16 'New Property Acquisition Standards to apply immediately to all acquiring authorities in New South Wales, including all general purpose and county councils' DFSI-2019-03-Property Acquisition Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils they must comply with the revised Property Acquisition Standards issued by the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation when undertaking acquisitions under the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991</i>
<p>Circular 17-42 'Changes to the Crown reserve management under the Crown Land Management Act 2016'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils of the commencement of the <i>Crown Land Management Act 2016</i> (CLM Act) in 2018. • The CLM Act will change the way Crown reserves are managed by councils. • Under the new system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – councils manage Crown reserves under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (LG Act) – ownership of the land will remain with the State with the NSW Minister for Lands and Forestry retaining certain oversight functions – the majority of council managed Crown reserves will be classified as community land, meaning councils will be required to have plans of management (PoM) under the LG Act for most Crown reserves that they manage. • The circular includes a diagram which provides an overview of the key steps for councils in the lead up to the commencement of the legislation.
<p>Circular 12-09 'Fair valuation - infrastructure, property, plant and equipment'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the timing of asset revaluations under the fair value model of AASB 116 'Property Plant and Equipment'.

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 09-25 'Land under roads'</p> <p>Circular 08-07 'Valuation of property, plant and equipment at fair value'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires councils to assess at each reporting date whether there is any indication an asset's carrying amount materially differs from its fair value. • Outlines the accounting requirements for land under roads acquired: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – before 1 July 2008 - councils can elect to recognise or not recognise this land as an asset – after 1 July 2008 - accounted for under AASB 116 'Property Plant and Equipment'. • Details council actions for land under roads acquired before and after 1 July 2008. • Requires councils to commence valuing property, plant and equipment at fair value. • Provides brief guidance on the valuation methods for operational and community land, buildings, plant and equipment and other assets.
Investment and borrowing powers	
<p>Circular 17-29 'Investment Policy Guidelines - Interim TCorp waiver'</p> <p>Investment Order</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – section 5 of OLG's Investment Policy Guidelines requires councils to seek advice only from advisors licensed by ASIC, and to obtain written confirmation that no actual or potential conflict of interest exist, and to undertake separate reference checks of advisors. – the NSW Government has waived the requirement under section 5, to the extent that councils engage and seek investment advice from NSW Treasury Corporation (TCorp) as part of their financial and strategic planning process. This waiver only applies to TCorp • The Investment Policy Guidelines 2010 is issued under section 23A of the LGA. • Issued pursuant to section 625 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. • Lists the approved forms of investments where councils may invest their funds (on the basis that the investments must be denominated in Australian dollars) • Establishes that all councils should by resolution adopt an investment policy that is consistent with this Order and any guidelines issued by the OLG.
<p>Investment Policy Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under section 23A of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. • Applies to all general purpose and special purpose councils. • The guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – help councils invest funds in a prudent and appropriate manner – outline the legislation associated with the investment of surplus funds – help councils prepare a suitable investment policy – outline key issues when investing funds – define duties and obligations of the council and council officers – outline the requirements for internal control procedures

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
Employment related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish proper reporting and monitoring procedures.
<p>Circular 26-06 ‘2026/27 Determination of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections 248 and 249 of the LGA requires councils to fix and pay an annual fee to councillors and mayors from 1 July 2026 based on the Tribunal’s determination for the 2026-27 financial year. • The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (the Tribunal) has determined an increase of 3.7% to mayoral and councillor fees for the 2026-27 financial year, with effect from 1 July 2026. • The Tribunal is required to determine the remuneration categories of councils and mayoral offices at least once every 3 years under section 239 of the Local Government Act 1993. In undertaking its review in 2026, the Tribunal concluded to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) adjust the population criteria for the ‘Major Strategic Area’ category to 200,000 (from 300,000) - (2) reclassify Dungog Shire Council as ‘Rural Large’ due to population grown
<p>Circular 25-10 ‘2025/26 Determination of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (the Tribunal) has determined an increase of 3% to mayoral and councillor fees for the 2025-26 financial year, effective from 1 July 2025. • The Tribunal must review the remuneration categories of councils and mayoral offices at least once every 3 years as per section 239 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. The last significant review was in 2023 and the next review will be in 2026. • The Tribunal found that t most councils’ current categories are based on the 2023 review. However, Mid Coast Council has been reclassified from a Regional Centre to Regional Strategic area effect from 1 July 2025. • Sections 248 and 249 of the Act require councils to fix and pay an annual fee to councillors and mayors from 1 July 2025 based on the Tribunal’s determination for the 2025-26 financial year.
<p>Circular 24-09 ‘Amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 removing the option for councils to employ senior council executives under statutory contracts’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>, as amended by the Local Government Amendment (Employment Arrangements) Act 2024. • Advises that as of 1 September 2024, councils will no longer have the option to determine positions within their organisation structure as “senior staff positions” and to employ the holders of those positions under the statutory contract approved by the “departmental chief executive” of the Office of Local Government (OLG). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From this date, new employees in these former roles will be employed under an award or enterprise agreement approved by the IRC. - Staff currently employed under the approved senior staff contract will continue to be employed under that contract until it expires. When the contract expires, senior staff’s employment can continue under an award or enterprise agreement, and councils will need a valid and lawful reason not to continue their employment. Where the employment of senior staff is transitioned to employment under an award or enterprise agreement, their accrued entitlements will be preserved.

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 23-11 'Effect of the NSW Government's policy on executive office holders' and senior executives' remuneration on general managers', executive officers' and senior staff remuneration'</p> <p>Circular 23-03 '2023–24 Determination of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The current provisions of the LG Act and Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 that apply to senior staff of councils will continue to apply to them while they continue to be employed under the senior staff contract. • The amendments mean that the governing bodies of councils and the general manager will have the following responsibilities in determining the organisation structure of a council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the governing body is required to approve the resources to be allocated to the employment of staff after consulting the general manager, and - the general manager is in turn responsible for determining the organisation structure of the council after consulting with the governing body. • Subject to the transitional arrangements set out below, the amendments will ultimately see the terms and conditions of employment of all council staff other than the general manager, regulated under an award or enterprise agreement approved by the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales (IRC). • Advises councils that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration (Executive Office Holders and Senior Executives) Regulation 2023 (SOORT Regulation) has been prescribed. Clause 4(1) of the SOORT Regulation states that the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal (the SOORT Tribunal) is not to award an increase in remuneration for NSW Government executive office holders and senior executives before 1 July 2025 - automatic annual increases in remuneration payable under the approved standard employment contracts for general managers of councils, executive officers of joint organisations and other senior staff are tied to determinations by the SOORT Tribunal - the SOORT Regulation was not intended to apply to local government. It remains open to councils and joint organisations to approve discretionary increases under the approved employment contracts where the employee's performance has been assessed as being of a better than satisfactory standard. • Advises councils that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (the Tribunal) has determined an increase of 3% to mayoral and councillor fees for the 2023–24 financial year, effective from 1 July 2023 - the Tribunal is required to determine the remuneration categories of councils and mayoral offices at least once every three years under section 239 of the LG Act - the Tribunal undertook a review of the categories as part of its 2023 determination. The Tribunal determined the creation of two new remuneration categories, 'Metropolitan Major' and 'Rural Large' and varied the criteria of several existing categories. As a result of the creation of the two new categories and changes to the criteria of some of the existing categories, the Tribunal has re-categorised

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 22-30 ‘Guidelines on the recruitment of senior council executives’ Guidelines on the recruitment of senior council executives</p> <p>Circular 22-25 ‘New standard contracts of employment for general managers and executive officers and updated guidelines for the appointment and oversight of general managers’ Standard Contract of Employment for General Managers and Executive Officers of Local Councils in NSW 2022</p> <p>Guidelines for the Appointment and Oversight of General Managers (issued via circular 22-25)</p>	<p>twenty-six councils into a higher existing category or into a new category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sections 248 and 249 of the LG Act require councils to fix and pay an annual fee to councillors and mayors from 1 July 2023 based on the Tribunal’s determination for the 2023–24 financial year - the level of fees paid will depend on the category the council is in. A council cannot fix a fee higher than the maximum amount determined by the Tribunal. If a council does not fix a fee, the council must pay the minimum fee determined by the Tribunal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under section 23A of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> in response to the Independent Commission Against Corruption’s corruption prevention recommendations arising from its investigation of the former Canterbury City Council (Operation Dasha). • The Guidelines provide guidance on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - merit selection in recruitment processes - the development of staff capabilities and the use of internal recruitment processes - the need for councils to have recruitment policies - the use of recruitment/human resources specialists when recruiting for senior executive roles - the use of subject matter experts when recruiting for senior executive roles - the role of internal audit in auditing recruitment processes - the role of councillors in the recruitment of staff - consultation with councillors on “senior staff” appointments, and - reporting wrongdoing in recruitment processes. • Issued under section 338(4) of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>, which requires general managers and executive officers to be employed under contracts with terms of between 12 months and 5 years based on the standard contracts approved by the departmental chief executive of OLG. • Councils and joint organisations must use the new approved standard contracts in employing general managers and executive officers. • The new standard contracts have been developed in consultation with the sector in response to recommendations arising from ICAC’s investigation of the former Canterbury City Council (Operation Dasha). • Issued under section 23A of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. • The Guidelines assist councillors when performing their functions under the Act relating to the appointment of general managers and overseeing their performance. They provide guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role of the general manager and the importance of a good working relationship between councillors and the general manager

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the recruitment process and the appointment of a general manager - day to day oversight of and liaison with the general manager - the performance review process - separation - renewal of the general manager's contract.
Audit and internal controls	
<p>Circular 24-11 ICAC guidance for councillors on corruption risks associated with overseas travel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under section 23A of the LGA • The guidance helps councillors understand the corruption, integrity and security risks posed by overseas travel by councillors and to mitigate those risks, and provides information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - existing statutory and other requirements relevant to overseas travel by councillors, - security risks for councillors when travelling overseas, - promoting council projects when overseas, - the potential for blackmail, and - the potential for corrupt conduct.
<p>Circular 23-15 'Regulation amendments prescribing requirements for audit risk and improvement committees, internal audit and risk management'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (the Regulation) has been amended to give statutory force to key elements of the Office of Local Government's (OLG) Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW (the Guidelines).
<p>Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amendments do not take effect until 1 July 2024 to allow councils and joint organisations time to implement them. Councils and joint organisations will be required to report on their compliance with the Regulation in their annual reports from 2024/25 • The Regulation provides for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - membership of councils' and joint organisations' ARICs - ARICs must comprise of an independent chairperson and at least two independent members. Councils and joint organisations may appoint one councillor (who must not be the Mayor) as a non-voting member of the ARIC - eligibility criteria and independence requirements for chairpersons and independent members of ARICs - council staff cannot be appointed as an independent member of another council's or joint organisation's ARIC where the ARIC is shared by the council or joint organisation that employs that person - ARIC chairpersons and members are to be appointed for a term of no more than 4 years. They may be re-appointed if eligible but must not be a member of the ARIC for more than 8 years in any 10-year period - ARICs must meet at least quarterly - councils and joint organisations must exercise their internal audit functions in accordance with the adopted internal audit charter

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 22-21 'Update on membership requirements for audit, risk and improvement committees'</p> <p>Circular 21-26 'New risk management and internal audit framework for councils and joint organisations'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - councils and joint organisations must adopt an internal audit charter by resolution. In doing so, they must consider the model internal audit charter approved by OLG - councils and joint organisations must adopt and implement a system for managing risk. • The following materials are released concurrent to the amendment of the Regulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW' (November 2023), which is issued under section 23A of the LGA. The content of this guidelines is largely the same as the draft version (issued in December 2022 via circular 22-41) and supersedes the NSW Government's Internal Audit Guidelines for Local Government in NSW (issued in 2010). - Model terms of reference for audit risk and improvement committees - Model internal audit charter - Templates for attestation and non-compliance statements (required to be published in councils' and joint organisations' annual reports from 2024/25) • Advises that OLG and NSW Treasury have agreed that the NSW Government's Prequalification Scheme for Audit and Risk Committee (ARIC) Chairs and Members will not be suitable for use by councils and joint organisations (JOs). • The removal of the requirement for ARIC chairs and a prescribed number of ARIC members to be appointed from the NSW Government prequalification scheme based on which tier a council is in, means that it is no longer necessary to place councils in tiers and these arrangements will no longer apply. • The proposed new requirements for ARIC membership which were set out in the attachment to the circular have been incorporated in the Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW (November 2023), which is issued under section 23A of the LGA [see also Circular 23-15, row above]. • The timeframe for compliance with the ARIC membership requirements in the Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW (the guidelines) was brought forward to 1 July 2024. As of that date all councils and JOs will be required to ensure ARIC chairs and members meet the eligibility and independence requirements set out in the guidelines and have a risk management framework and internal audit function that complies with the guidelines [see also Circular 23-15, row above]. • Advises councils of the new risk management and internal audit framework for councils and joint organisations (JOs). • Under section 428A of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (LG Act), all councils (including county councils) and JOs are required to have an audit risk and improvement committee (ARIC). Councils and JOs are permitted under section 238B of the LG Act to enter into arrangements with other councils or joint organisations to share ARICs.

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The transition provision of the LG Act requires all councils and JOs to appoint an ARIC or entered into an arrangement with another council or JO to share an ARIC before 4 June 2022. [See Circular 23-15 for requirements applying after 1 July 2024.]
Governance	
<p>Circular 26-02 2025 'Model Meeting Code –Supplementary guidance and updated FAQs'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advises that supplementary guidance materials have been published on the Office of Local Government’s (OLG) website to support the implementation of the 2025 Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW (2025 Model Meeting Code). The supplementary guidance materials include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines on the closure of council and committee meetings to the public (Closed Meetings Guidelines) Livestreaming council and committee meetings and public forums: A Guide (Livestreaming Guidelines) Model public forum rules (Public Forum Rules) The Closed Meeting Guidelines have been issued under 10B(5) of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (LG Act). This provides that, in deciding whether part of a meeting is to be closed to the public, the council or committee concerned must have regard to any relevant guidelines issued by the ‘Departmental Chief Executive’ of OLG. The Livestreaming Guidelines have been issued under section 23A of the LG Act meaning councils must take them into consideration when livestreaming their meetings and publishing recordings of them on their websites. The Model Public Forum Rules are based on the non-mandatory best practice public forum rules which were previously included in the Model Meeting Code but have now been omitted. Councils may adopt the best practice public forum rules as a standalone policy document or include them in their adopted code of meeting practice. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) previously published with Circular 25-20 '2025 Model Meeting Code' have also been updated to reflect common questions and issues raised by the sector following the prescription of the 2025 Model Meeting Code.
<p>Circular 25-20 '2025 Model Meeting Code' 2025 Model Meeting Code</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advises the new 2025 Model Meeting Code has been published. The Code is a uniform set of meeting rules to ensure council meetings are open, accessible, orderly, effective and efficient. These rules also apply to meetings of the boards of joint organisations and county councils. I The Code includes mandatory and non-mandatory provisions. Councils are required to adopt a code of meeting practice incorporating the mandatory provisions no later than 31 December 2025. As required by section 361 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>, before adopting the Code, councils must first exhibit a draft of its code of meeting practice for at least 28 days and provide members of the community at least 42 days to comment on its draft code of meeting practice. If a council doesn't adopt a new code of meeting practice with the mandatory provisions of the revised model code by 31

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Model code of meeting practice (2021 version)</p>	<p>December 2025, any conflicting parts of the existing code will be void from 1 January 2026. The mandatory provisions of the model code will automatically apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: The OLG released an updated version of the ‘Model Code of meeting practice’ in August 2025. • Councils must adopt a code of meeting practice that incorporates the mandatory provisions of the model meeting code within 12 months of the local government elections. A council’s adopted meeting code must not contain provisions that are inconsistent with the mandatory provisions. • Councils and committees of councils of which all the members are councillors must conduct their meetings in accordance with the code of meeting practice adopted by the council. • Under section 361 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>, before adopting a new code of meeting practice, councils must first exhibit a draft of the code of meeting practice for at least 28 days and provide members of the community at least 42 days in which to comment on the draft code. This requirement does not apply to joint organisations.
<p>Circular 24-06 ‘Privacy and the Mandatory Notification of Data Breach Scheme’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the Mandatory Notification of Data Breach Scheme (MNDB Scheme) commenced on 28 November 2023 following a 12-month transition period – the MNDB scheme is a mandatory notification requirement under the <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> for NSW public sector agencies (including councils), in the event of an ‘eligible data breach’ – under the MNDB Scheme, they are required to satisfy other data management requirements, including maintaining an internal data breach incident register, and having a publicly accessible data breach policy (DBP). – they are required to ensure their DBP is publicly accessible, which means councils should publish their DBP on their website.
<p>24-03 ‘Performance and suspension orders’</p> <p>‘Performance and Suspension Orders – Procedural Framework’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that OLG has published a revised framework for issuing performance and suspension orders. Under the LGA, the Minister for Local Government has powers to intervene in councils when they are dysfunctional or failing to meet their legal obligations. The revised framework has been updated to be consistent with current statutory requirements under the LGA, and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021. • The framework provides information for councils on the process that will be followed when performance improvement orders and/or suspension orders are being considered or issued, including details relating to the appointment of temporary advisors, financial controllers and interim administrators.
<p>Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW - 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW (“the Model Code of Conduct”) is made under section 440 of the Local Government Act and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005. It sets the minimum standards of conduct for council officials. • Section 440 of the LGA requires every council (including county councils) and joint organisation to adopt a code of conduct that

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
	<p>incorporates the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct. A council's or joint organisation's adopted code of conduct has no effect to the extent that it is inconsistent with the Model Code of Conduct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Code of Conduct includes requirements across various areas, including general conduct, pecuniary interests, non-pecuniary conflicts of interest, personal benefit, relationships between council officials, access to information and council resources, disclosures of interests, written returns of interest, and special disclosure of pecuniary interests. • Failure by a councillor to comply with the standards of conduct prescribed under this code constitutes misconduct for the purposes of the LGA. The LGA provides for a range of penalties that may be imposed on councillors for misconduct, including suspension or disqualification from civic office. A councillor who has been suspended on three or more occasions for misconduct is automatically disqualified from holding civic office for five years • Failure by a member of staff to comply with a council's code of conduct may give rise to disciplinary action.
<p>Circular 23-13 'Release of the Information and Privacy Commission's follow up audit of councils' compliance with open access requirements in relation to returns of interests'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) has issued a report on the outcome of its follow-up audit undertaken on councils' compliance with the requirement to publish information in returns of interest lodged by councillors and designated persons on their websites. The IPC's recent audit follows an earlier audit conducted in July 2021 which identified significant compliance failures. • The IPC's report found that while there has been significant improvement in councils' compliance with their obligations under the GIPA Act to publish information in returns of interests submitted by councillors and designated persons on their websites, some councils continue to be non-compliant. • The report makes seven recommendations for councils to implement to promote openness, transparency, and accountability in relation to the disclosure of information in returns of interests. • The IPC will continue to monitor compliance by the local government sector and, where relevant, assist the sector in its implementation of the recommendations set out in the report.
<p>Circular 22-38 'Consultation on the outcomes of the review of the councillor misconduct framework'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that Mr Gary Kellar PSM completed his review of the councillor misconduct framework and has provided his report to the Minister. The <i>'Focus on Civic Responsibility: Councillor Conduct Accountability in New South Wales Report'</i> (October 2022) is available on the Office of Local Government's website.
<p>Council Circular 24-23 Consultation on reforms to council meeting practices - Office of Local Government NSW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review examined the current administrative framework under which complaints about councillor misconduct are managed, with the aim of identifying areas for improvement. Mr Kellar has made 49 recommendations. Among other things, Mr Kellar has recommended the establishment of a new framework for dealing with councillor misconduct in which code of conduct complaints about councillors are managed by regionally based Independent Councillor Conduct Review Panels under the regulatory oversight of an independent Councillor Conduct Commissioner. Panels will have stronger disciplinary powers

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 22-15 'Guidance for councils on the publication of disclosure of interest returns'</p>	<p>than those currently available to councils including the ability to impose monetary penalties. Councils will be required to meet the panels' and the Commissioner's costs in dealing with complaints about their councillors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The circular advises that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) has developed a video animation which provides guidance to councils on the requirement to publish disclosure of interest returns on their websites – IPC's video has been developed to complement the compliance report it published last year following an audit of councils' compliance with the requirement to publish councillors' and designated persons' disclosure of interest returns on their websites in accordance with the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> (the GIPA Act) – the report makes several recommendations for councils to implement to promote openness and transparency in relation to disclosure of interest returns and a policy framework for managing their publication – councils should review how they currently publish disclosure of interest returns on their websites by applying the principles set out in the video animation.
<p>Circular 19-21 'Release of IPC Guideline 1 Returns of Interests'</p> <p>Guideline 1: For local councils on the disclosure of information contained in the returns disclosing the interest of councillors and designated persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that the Information and Privacy Commission has finalised and issued 'Guideline 1: For local councils on the disclosure of information contained in the returns disclosing the interest of councillors and designated persons' (Guideline 1). • Part 4 of the Model Code of Conduct establishes the requirements for the disclosure of pecuniary interests by councillors and designated persons. This includes disclosures of interests in written returns (returns of interests) and disclosures of pecuniary interests at meetings. Guideline 1 deals only with requirements in relation to written returns of interests and does not affect the obligations of councillors or committee members to disclose pecuniary interests at meetings • Guideline 1 provides how certain requirements in clause 1(2)(a) of Schedule 1 of the GIPA Regulation (that returns of councillors and designated persons be released as part of local councils' open access information) should be interpreted. Guideline 1 states that councillors' and designated persons' returns of interests must be made publicly available free of charge on councils' websites, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information contained in them or to do so would impose unreasonable additional costs on the council.
<p>Circular 21-22 Updated guidance on the appointment and dismissal of senior staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides updated guidance to councils on the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (LG Act) relating to the appointment and dismissal of senior staff other than the general manager. [See also Circular 24-09 which introduces provisions on 1 September 2024, with respect to "senior staff positions"] • Advises councils that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – under section 338 of the LG Act only general managers and the holders of positions determined by the council by resolution to be 'senior staff' positions may be employed under fixed term contracts of employment based on those

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
	<p>approved by the 'Departmental Chief Executive' of the Office of Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - council staff must not be employed under a senior staff contract unless the council has first determined by resolution that the position the staff member has been appointed to, is a senior staff position for the purposes of section 332 of the LG Act - under section 337 of the LG Act general managers must consult with the governing body of the council before appointing or dismissing the holders of senior staff positions.
<p>Circular 20-13 'Managing fraud and corruption risks during the COVID-19 pandemic'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils of two new resources that have been issued to assist government agencies (including councils) to manage the fraud and corruption risks associated with these changes to their operations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. • Encourages councils to consider these resources and to make any necessary changes to their operations and internal control framework in response to the guidance provided in them. • These resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption's Managing corrupt conduct during the COVID-19 outbreak which provides guidance on fraud and corruption risks associated with working from home, procurement and purchasing and stimulus funding and new programs - the Australian Cyber Security Centre's Web Conferencing Security which provides guidance on the use of web conferencing and collaboration tools and the management of associated privacy, security and legal risks.
<p>Circular 18-37 'Audit Office - Local Government Fraud Control Performance Audit'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the outcome of the sector-wide performance audit conducted by the Audit Office on councils' fraud controls. • Encourages councils to review their fraud controls and assess their efficacy against the Audit Office's Fraud Control Improvement Kit. • Advises that all councils must adopt an internal reporting policy for the management of public interest disclosures.
<p>Legislative requirements</p>	
<p>Circular 25-23 'Local Government (General) Regulation Review'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise that OLG is undertaking a statutory review of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (LG Regulation). • The statutory review will occur in stages and will see the LG Regulation split into three stand-alone instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Government (Elections) Regulation (LG Elections Regulation), (the subject of the current review), - Local Government (Council Governance and Operations) Regulation (LG Council Governance and Operations Regulation), and - Local Government (Approvals) Regulation (LG Approvals Regulation). • The first step will focus on transferring the election provisions of the LG Regulation to a new standalone LG Elections Regulation. Reviews of the other two sets of provisions referred to above will occur in 2026.

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 25-13 Council de-amalgamations – amendments to the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises of the amendments to the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (LG Act) for council de-amalgamations have commenced, effective 22 May 2025. • The legislative amendments provide a new pathway for councils and communities to pursue de-amalgamation. • Under the new de-amalgamation pathway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – councils must create a business case for de-amalgamation with community input to ensure residents are informed of potential implications which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – estimated financial impacts, including rates and charges after de-amalgamation and any NSW Government funding assistance – future sustainability, long-term strategic plans, and the capacity of the new councils to provide services and infrastructure – proposed governance and operational arrangements, including transitional arrangements – the Minister will refer the business case to the Local Government Boundaries Commission for independent review – if the Commission recommends the proposal and the Minister is satisfied, a compulsory referendum will be held for the community to vote on de-amalgamation – the majority of the community must support the proposal for it to proceed – the Government may provide financial assistance through a grant of up to \$5 million and/or a TCorp loan.
<p>Circular 23-17 ‘Update on councils’ obligations under the <i>Modern Slavery Act 2018</i> (NSW)’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new process does not apply to the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council de-amalgamation proposal which is being progressed via an alternate legislative pathway. • Advises that the NSW Anti-slavery Commissioner (the Commissioner) has issued guidance on reasonable steps to manage modern slavery risks in operations and supply chains (the Guidance on Reasonable Steps) operative from 1 January 2024. The guidance was developed as a result of the local government sector and other covered entities identifying there was limited formal, authoritative guidance available to manage their modern slavery risk management efforts. • For annual reporting between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024, the Guidance on Reasonable Steps will be in effect and councils are expected to report in accordance with it. From 1 January 2024, councils should report annually in two places: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – by including relevant information in their agency’s formal annual report; and – using the online GRS Annual Reporting Form. • From 1 July 2024, councils must file an online report with the Office of the Anti-slavery Commissioner within 45 days of the entry into force of any contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – arising from a ‘heightened’ modern slavery due diligence procurement process; and – with a value of AUD \$150,000 (including GST) or more.
<p>Guidance on reasonable steps to manage modern slavery risks in operations and supply chains</p>	

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 23-01 'Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021 – Conclusion of the Grace Period and updated guidance'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that the grace period under the <i>Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021</i> (PSUP Act) concludes on 30 April 2023. From 1 May 2023, authorised officers may issue fines for all offences under the PSUP Act. • The PSUP Guidelines have been updated with new information to reflect the upcoming changes to the PSUP Act from 1 May 2023 and to provide additional information to support councils to feel confident in implementing the new laws locally. • Encourages councils to develop appropriate policy and procedures, in consultation with their local community, in relation to local enforcement action under the PSUP laws.
<p>Circular 22-09 'Councils' obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2018'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that the commencement of the <i>Modern Slavery Act 2018</i> (NSW) (Modern Slavery Act), introduces new obligations for councils under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> relating to modern slavery. • From 1 July 2022, councils will be required to take reasonable steps to ensure that goods and services procured by and for the council are not the product of modern slavery within the meaning of the Modern Slavery Act. • From the 2022–23 financial year, each council will be required to publish in their annual reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a statement of the action taken by the council in relation to any issue raised by the Anti-slavery Commissioner during the year concerning the operations of the council and identified by the Commissioner as being a significant issue – a statement of steps taken to ensure that goods and services procured by and for the council during the year were not the product of modern slavery within the meaning of the Modern Slavery Act.
<p>Circular 21-33 'Compliance with records management provisions and transfer of local government records to the State Archives Collection'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) has issued a circular C2021-05 'Managing Records in NSW Government' providing advice on the making, keeping and safeguarding of records. • Under section 12 of the <i>State Records Act 1998</i> (SR Act), a council must make and keep full and accurate records of its activities and maintain a records management program that conforms with standards and codes of best practice. • NSW State Archives and Records (SARA) has released the Records Management Assessment Tool (RMAT) for assessing records management performance and maturity and planning for improvements, and Transfer Tool to identify and forecast records required for transfer to the State Archives Collection. • All staff, councillors and council officials should be made aware of their responsibilities to make and keep records. • Councils should review their records management program and systems against DPC circular C2021-05 and the RMAT for compliance with obligations under the SR Act, with particular consideration to the increasing use of records in digital format and digitally stored records.
<p>Circular 21-07 'Commencement of Local Government Amendment Act 2021'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils that the <i>Local Government Amendment Act 2021</i> (the Amendment Act) was assented to on 24 May 2021. Certain reforms come into effect on the date of assent, with some reforms commencing at a later date by proclamation.

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Amendment Act includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reforms to ensure a fairer and more flexible rating system for councils and ratepayers provision allowing option for Council to make superannuation payments for councillors minor changes that relate to council elections and the terms of office of chairs of county councils and joint organisations.
Integrated planning and reporting	
<p>Circular 21-28 'Updated Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines and Handbook'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advises councils that the streamlined integrated planning and reporting requirements are now in place. The Office of Local Government has revised the Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines, which is accessible alongside the Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook (Handbook). The Guidelines are issued under section 406 of the LGA and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (the regulations). Councils are required to establish and implement a strategy (called its community engagement strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters) no later than 12 months after the next ordinary election. Councils are required to appoint an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee to keep under review the implementation of integrated planning and reporting.
<p>Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (the framework)</p> <p>Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines (the guidelines)</p> <p>Integrated Planning & Reporting Handbook for Local Councils in NSW (the handbook)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Guidelines are issued under section 406 of the LGA and Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (the regulations). The Handbook should be read in conjunction with the Guidelines. Requires councils to plan and report activities in accordance with the LG Act and the regulations, including having: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a community strategic plan a resourcing strategy a delivery program an operational plan. The framework allows councils to draw various plans and policies together, understand how they interact and get the maximum leverage from their efforts by planning holistically and sustainably for the future. The guidelines list all the mandatory requirements from the LG Act, regulations and the essential elements councils must follow when undertaking their planning and reporting activities.
<p>Circular 18-22 'Release of the Charter for Public Participation – a guide to assist agencies and promote citizen engagement'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advises councils of the Charter for Public Participation (the charter) which aims to assist NSW agencies to seek effective public input into the development and delivery of policies and services. Recommends that councils consider using the charter in developing community engagement strategies to inform strategic planning, policy development and other decision-making.
Rating and special variations and other revenue	

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Council Circular – GC154 – 2025-26 Financial Assistance Grants (FA Grants) – Advance Payment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that the Commonwealth Government has announced an advance payment of the preliminary FY 2025-26 Financial Assistance (FA) Grants, representing approximately 50% of the amount councils are entitled to. The advance payment allocations have been determined on the basis of the allocations for FY 2024-25. The NSW Grants Commission is yet to determine allocations for the 2025-26 financial year. • The advance payment amount will be paid to councils immediately and the remaining balance will be paid in quarterly instalments during 2025-26. The first quarterly instalment is expected to be paid to councils in mid-August 2025, with subsequent instalments in November 2025, February 2026 and May 2026. • Further adjustments to the remaining payment will take into account the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – determination by the Commonwealth Treasurer of the final adjustments for FY 2024-25 – Local Government Grants Commission’s (the Commission) final recommendations for FY 2025-26 • The Commission will advise councils of their final recommendations after the Commonwealth advises the amount of the final adjustment.
<p>Council Rating and Revenue Raising Manual 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the main sources of council income under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. • The Rating and Revenue Raising Manual is listed as a ‘practice note and other best practice guidance’ publication by OLG. • Provides a comprehensive overview of rates including categories of rates, rate structures, charges for domestic waste services, rate exemptions, levying and payment of rates and charges, concessions and fees.
<p>Circular 24-12 ‘Annual CPI Adjustment to companion animal fees for 2024/25’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that all registration and annual permit fees for companion animals have been adjusted for inflation for 2024–25, under clauses 18 and 27 of the Companion Animals Regulation 2018.
<p>Circular 24-05 Information about rating 2024-25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines changes to the following rates for 2024–25, under the LGA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – maximum boarding house tariffs – maximum interest rate payable on overdue rates and charges – section 603 certificate fee – statutory limit on the maximum amount of minimum rates. • Requires councils to incorporate these determinations into their 2024–25 rating structures and operational plan statement of revenue policies.
<p>Circular 25-06 Rating information 2025-26</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines changes to the following rates for 2025-26, under the LGA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – maximum boarding house tariffs – maximum interest rate payable on overdue rates and charges – section 603 certificate fee – statutory limit on the maximum amount of minimum rates.

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 22-10 'Local Government Amendment Act 2021 – Guidance on local government rating reforms</p> <p>Local Government Amendment Act 2021 – Guidance on local government rating reforms</p> <p>Circular 21-32 'Government endorses new rate peg methodology to support growing councils'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires councils to incorporate these determinations into their 2025–26 rating structures and operational plan statement of revenue policies. • Advises that guidance on local government rating reforms (the Guidance) has been prepared to assist NSW councils with reforms to the rating system that were made through the <i>Local Government Amendment Act 2021</i> (Amendment Act) in 2021 [see also Circular 21-07]. • The Guidance covers four rating reforms that came into effect immediately on 24 May 2021. The reforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – allow each council created by merger in 2016 to bring together (harmonise) its rating structures gradually, over up to eight years, in consultation with its community – enable a different rate peg to be set for each council, or for different cohorts of councils, and allowing it to be set as a methodology rather than a percentage, including by specifying a base percentage to which an additional figure may be added in specified circumstances – allow all councils to set separate rates for different residential areas within a contiguous urban area, in certain circumstances, whether or not they have different 'centres of population', and – allow all councils to set farmland rates based on geographic location. • Advises that the minister has endorsed the new rate peg methodology and has asked Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to give effect to it in setting the rate peg from the 2022–23 financial year. • Some of the key points of the change include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an amendment to the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> to ensure that multiple rate pegs may be set – councils with growing residential populations will be able to raise notional general income by an additional population factor as part of the rate peg from 2022–23 – the population factor for each council will reflect estimated residential population growth less revenue received from supplementary valuations that year. This will increase revenue for many councils serving growing communities – no council will be worse off under the new methodology – IPART has estimated that, for example, over the past four years, the new rate peg methodology would have increased total general income for the local government sector by 1.5 per cent, or \$287 million.
<p>Guidelines for the preparation of an application for a special variation to general income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued pursuant to sections 23A, 508A and 508(2) of the LGA. • Establishes guidelines for councils applying for special variations. • Sets the assessment criteria for applications and provides information on how and when to apply. • Advises that with the rate path protection ending in the 2020–21 rating year, any new council must submit a special variation application in line with these guidelines to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal if the council wishes to

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Guidelines for the preparation of an application to increase minimum rates above the statutory limit</p> <p>Circular 18-39 'Debt Management and Hardship Guidelines' Debt Management and Hardship Guidelines 2018</p>	<p>harmonise rates in a way that increases general income above the rate peg from the 2021–22 rating year onwards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued pursuant to section 548 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (LG Act). • Apply to all councils, except in specific circumstances, to new councils yet to harmonise. • Advises that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal will assess and determine special variation applications by councils – when councils resolve to adopt a minimum amount of a rate, the size of the minimum amount must not exceed the relevant permissible limits provided in section 548(3) of the LG Act and clause 126 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – 'Special Guidelines for new councils applying to harmonise minimum rates on 1 July 2021' (special guidelines) have been issued to new councils. The special guidelines temporarily replace, in specific circumstances only, these minimum rates guidelines for new councils formed during a council merger process in 2016 and required to harmonise rates on 1 July 2021. • Advises the Office of Local Government has issued new guidelines on debt management and hardship practices for all NSW councils. • The guidelines are issued under section 23A of the LGA.
<p>Pensioner concession Factsheet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly outlines the pensioner concessions on ordinary council rates and domestic waste management services charges, concessional amounts and eligibility.
<p>Circular 06-47 'Stormwater Management Services Charge Guidelines'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under section 23A of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. • Details the requirements for levying the stormwater management services charge.
<p>Council elections</p>	
<p>Circular 25-16 Councillor Handbook 2024</p> <p>Councillor handbook 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OLG has issued a 2024 edition of the Councillor Handbook to assist and inform new and returning councillors in the exercise of their functions. • The Handbook provides a guidance and information on a range of topics, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an overview of local government in NSW – a councillor's role, responsibilities and relationship – code of conduct – council meetings – sound planning and reporting (including community strategic planning, land use planning, natural resource management) – financial management (sources of revenue, financial planning, allocation of revenue, asset management, capital expenditure, financial reporting, other financial management issues) – support for councillors.
<p>Miscellaneous items</p>	

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>Circular 25-14 Publication of the updated Local Government Filming Protocol</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that the Local Government Filming Protocol (Protocol) has been updated replacing the 2009 version. • The Protocol: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is issued under Section 119D of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> and sets out requirements for both councils and filmmakers associated with filming related activity approvals. – includes changes to maximum fees that a council may levy in relation to filming related activities which are now adjusted annually in line with CPI. Councils should review these changes for development of relevant sections of Operational Plans and Revenue Policies.
<p>Circular 25-01 ‘Cyber Security Guidelines for Councils’</p> <p>Cyber Security Guidelines - Local Government 2024 (Published January 2025)</p> <p>22-39 ‘Release of Cyber Security Guidelines for NSW Local Government’ (Published 2022)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises that the updated Cyber Security Guidelines – Local Government (the Guidelines) allow councils to assess their cyber security maturity and plan their maturity uplift. The Guidelines outline cyber security standards and controls recommended by Cyber Security NSW for NSW local government. • Councils can adopt the Guidelines or use them to form the basis of an internally developed cyber security policy. OLG strongly recommends adherence to the Guidelines. • The Guidelines and relevant templates for council use are hosted on the Councils and Cyber Security NSW Microsoft Teams forum. To join the forum, councils can contact community@cyber.nsw.gov.au. • Advises the Cyber Security Guidelines – Local Government (the guidelines) allow councils to assess their cyber security maturity and plan their maturity uplift. The guidelines outline cyber security standards and controls recommended by Cyber Security NSW for NSW local governments. • Councils can adopt the guidelines or use them to form the basis of an internally developed cyber security policy.
<p>23-12 Guidelines on the withdrawal of development applications</p> <p>Section 23A Guidelines on the withdrawal of Development Applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under section 23A of the LGA. • Require councils to consider and apply all necessary measures to accelerate their development assessment processes. • Support councils’ legislative responsibilities and provide sector-wide guidance on how to manage the withdrawal of development applications
<p>22-42 ‘Councils and joint organisations to provide OLG’s credit card guidelines to their ARICs’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under section 23A of the LGA. • Advises NSW Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee has recommended that OLG’s Guidelines on the Use and Management of Credit Cards (guidelines) should be provided to councils’ audit risk and improvement committees (ARICs) to provide further guidance on credit card use. • General managers of councils and executive officers of joint organisations should arrange for the credit card guidelines to be provided to the chair of their ARICs.
<p>Circular 21-29 ‘Release of the Guideline on the Use and Management of Credit Cards’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued under section 23A of the LGA. • Advises that the Office Local Government has released the ‘Guideline on the Use and Management of Credit Cards’ (the guideline). This guideline provides an overarching framework and suggested considerations and approaches to guide the

Items [see legend]	Details [see legend]
<p>‘Guideline on the Use and Management of Credit Cards’</p>	<p>development and/or review of credit card policies and related procedures and is divided into two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part A provides a list of core responsibilities that councils should consider as foundational elements of their credit card policy and related procedures • Part B provides operational guidance that expands on these core responsibilities with practical advice on best practice credit card management and the responsibilities of individual cardholders, including risk management, preventative controls and detective controls.
<p>Circular 19-06 ‘Changes to emergency services funding arrangements’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of the changes made by the NSW Government to workers’ compensation to provide better protection for volunteer and career firefighters affected by work-related cancers - that the local government share of the cost of the emergency services levy will be 11.7 per cent.
<p>Circular 17-25 ‘Container Deposit Scheme and waste management contracts’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of the commencement of the NSW Container Deposit Scheme (the Scheme) on 1 December 2017, with a 10 per cent refund claimable on eligible containers - that under the Scheme, operators of Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) will be able to claim a portion of the refund on containers collected from kerbside recycling using the MRF Protocol - that the NSW Government will provide support to councils to assist with renegotiation of kerbside waste management contracts and other agreements affected by the scheme, so that councils and their ratepayers can share in the proceeds of refunds claimed under the Scheme
<p>Provision of Financial Assistance under Section 356</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages councils to develop a policy on granting of financial assistance to others (including charitable, community and sporting organisations and private individuals), to help councils achieve greater transparency and accountability and adhere to section 356 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. Section 356 of the LGA requires that any financial assistance provided by council must be for the purpose of exercising the council’s functions.

Our vision

Our insights inform and challenge government to improve outcomes for citizens.

Our purpose

To help Parliament hold government accountable for its use of public resources.



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