

Submission on the Model Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy: Consultation Draft

August 2021

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Opening:

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the 'Model Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy: Consultation Draft' (MCSI policy).

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) is the peak body for local government in NSW, representing NSW general purpose councils and related entities.

This submission was endorsed by the LGNSW Board at its meeting of 20 August 2021. No revisions were made by the Board.

Submission:

LGNSW believes that, on the whole, the MCSI policy has the potential to assist in creating appropriate and beneficial interactions between councillors and staff that are facilitative of the performance of their respective duties.

In LGNSW's view, the greatest value provided by the MCSI policy is through the creation of a Schedule of authorised staff contacts for councillors. LGNSW believes that such a Schedule, if adopted and utilised correctly, would help to create a framework by which to govern the often-necessary interactions between councillors and staff and enable each to fulfil their respective obligations under the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act).

LGNSW believes that the Schedule would not only assist in promoting appropriate interactions between Councillors and staff but that it would also assist in preventing inadvertent or accidental inappropriate interactions, including the perception of inappropriate interactions. This would have a protective element for both Councillors and staff.

LGNSW is of the view that the MCSI policy, when viewed and utilised in conjunction with the LG Act and the Model Code of Conduct, provides some practical examples and guidance for what constitutes appropriate and necessary interactions between Councillors and staff. These examples would likely assist in the review and management of Code of Conduct complaints and in establishing whether a complaint requires action or not.

LGNSW notes that the MCSI policy, if adopted by the OLG, would not be mandatory. LGNSW supports the maintenance of this position.