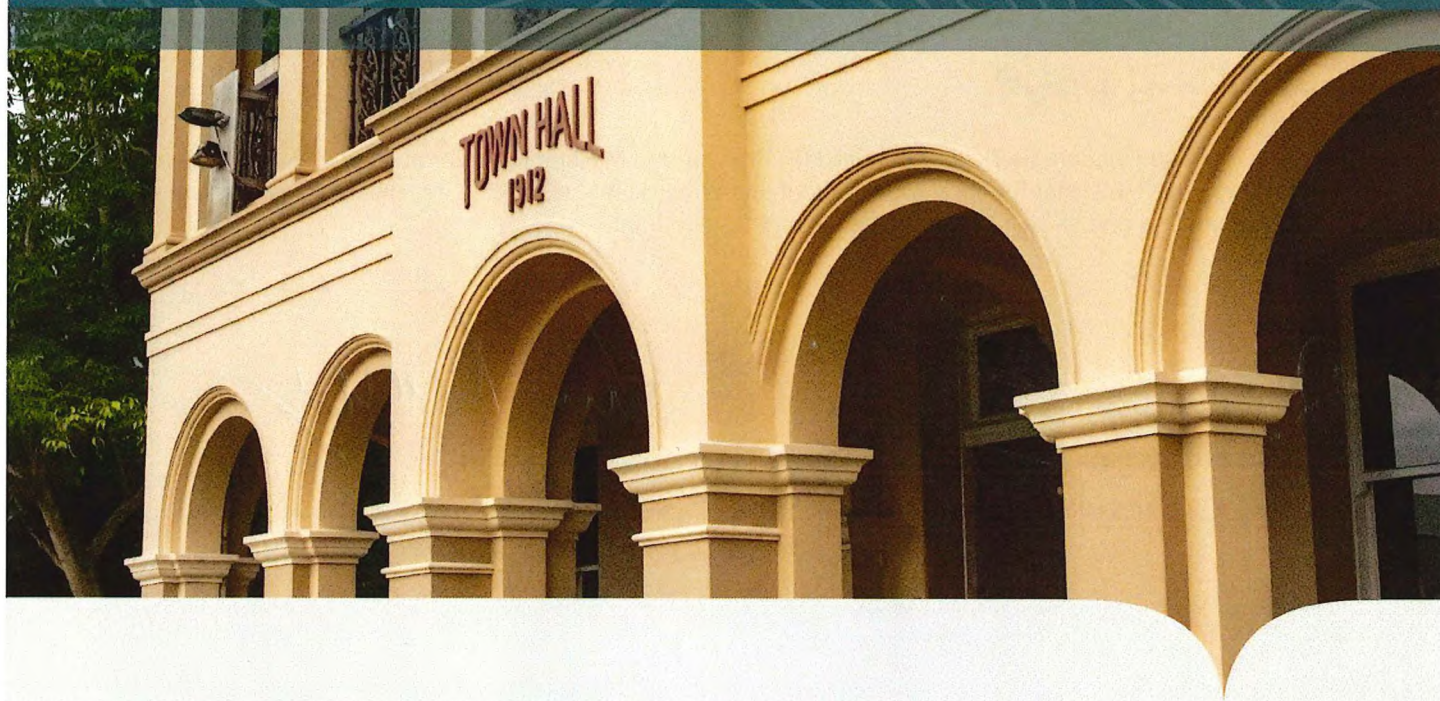




Queensland
Government

Department of Local Government,
Water and Volunteers



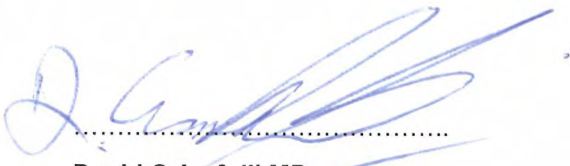
Equal Partners in Government

An agreement for the partnership and relationship between the
State of Queensland and Local Government in Queensland

dlgww.qld.gov.au

Signing page

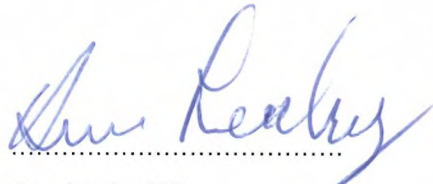
Signed by the Honourable David Crisafulli MP, Premier and Minister for Veterans and the Honourable Ann Leahy MP, Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers, for and on behalf of the Queensland Government.



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David Crisafulli MP

Premier and Minister for Veterans



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Ann Leahy MP

*Minister for Local Government and Water
Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and
Volunteers*

Signed by Mayor Matt Burnett, President and by Alison Smith, Chief Executive Officer of the Local Government Association of Queensland Ltd. for and on behalf of Queensland Local Governments.



.....

Mayor Matt Burnett

*President of the Local Government
Association of Queensland Ltd.*



.....

Alison Smith

*Chief Executive Officer of the
Local Government Association of Queensland
Ltd.*

this ELEVENTH day of MARCH 2025.

1. Background

Queensland has a long and proud history of Local Government - the first Local Governments were already in place at the time that Queensland achieved statehood.

Local Government is the level of government closest to the community. Every day it affects the lives of Queenslanders – our local services, where we live, and the look and feel of our communities. Local Government is a genuinely equal partner in the Australian government system.

Historically, Queensland's State and Local Governments have had a strong relationship based on cooperation, mutual respect, trust and the desire to improve outcomes for all Queenslanders.

The new Queensland Government and Local Governments are committed to rebuilding this historic and mutually beneficial relationship through the signing of this Agreement. For its part, the new Queensland Government will:

- create an environment where the Local Government sector is empowered, including through fit for purpose legislation, and
- ensure Local Government is held to high levels of integrity and accountability, while enabling Councillors to serve their community without unnecessary regulatory burden.

Both the Queensland Government and Local Government have a vital role in the delivering *The Right Plan for Queensland's Future* to get Queensland heading in the right direction for the benefit of all Queenslanders. The Queensland Government has made the following fundamental commitments to Queenslanders to:

- restore safety where Queenslanders live
- reinstate health services when Queenslanders need them
- return respect for Queenslanders' money
- reimagine a place to call home
- redesign a government that works for Queenslanders.

These commitments can only be achieved by the Queensland Government and Local Government working together as genuine and equal partners.

It is recognised that other agreements covering specific matters may be needed and this Agreement does not limit the capacity of the Parties to enter into such agreements.

2. Objective

The Agreement:

- formalises a set of principles to guide the relationship between the Parties
- identifies the roles and responsibilities of each party
- encourages positive and cooperative relations between both Parties based on mutual respect and consultation, with the aim of achieving better outcomes for Queenslanders.

3. Principles

3.1 Empowered local governments and accountability

- Local government should be empowered to serve their community, including through fit for purpose legislation, whilst being held to high levels of integrity and accountability.

3.2 Localised decision making through subsidiarity

- Responsibility for decisions should rest with the lowest level of government capable of properly doing so.

3.3 Equality through clearly established jurisdictions

- It is recognised that both Local Government and the Queensland Government have legitimate interests and jurisdictional responsibilities.
- Local Governments' legitimate interests and autonomous jurisdiction responsibilities are for the good rule and government of their local areas.
- The Queensland Government's legitimate interests and jurisdictional responsibilities are for the good rule and government of the entire State.
- In exercising this jurisdiction, the Queensland Government has the responsibility to set, regulate and enforce appropriate policies and standards for the good of the entire community and which have state-wide and regional impacts and implications. In doing so, the Queensland Government regulates activities and functions which may involve Local Government.
- During the development, regulation and enforcement of appropriate community standards, the Queensland Government will consider the interests of a variety of community sectors, of which Local Government is an important sector.

3.4 Minimum intervention from the Queensland Government

- It is recognised that Local Governments are ultimately accountable to their communities for their activities.
- Local Government will be subject to minimum intervention from the Queensland Government in respect of its legitimate interests and jurisdictional responsibilities (including but not limited to revenue raising, local laws and land use planning).
- The Queensland Government interest will be only exercised where legitimate State interests exist.

3.5 Transparency and consistent governance arrangements

- Although Local Governments are accountable to their communities and subject to minimum intervention from the Queensland Government, Local Government is subject to oversight by independent bodies including the Queensland Audit Office, Ombudsman, the Independent Assessor and the Crime and Corruption Commission.
- The governance arrangements that apply to Local Government should, where appropriate, be consistent with those applying to the Queensland Government.
- To ensure the highest level of integrity and accountability, Local Governments are committed to open and transparent decision-making.

3.6 Compliance requirements to ensure community benefit and local autonomy

- To ensure that appropriate standards are maintained for the benefit of the entire community, Local Government has a responsibility to comply with any applicable legislative, industry or professional requirements.
- Where Local Government enforces community regulatory standards on behalf of the Queensland Government, these standards will be, to the greatest extent possible, performance-based rather than prescriptive to ensure local autonomy, interests and conditions.

3.7 Effective and practical devolution/delegation of responsibilities

- The devolution or delegation of new responsibilities, roles and functions to Local Government should only occur where:
 - there has been prior consultation
 - the financial implications and other impacts on Local Government are taken into account, and
 - the identification and availability of an ongoing revenue source—e.g. user charges—has been considered.

3.8 Delivering on funding programs and strategies for financial sustainability

- Local Governments must think strategically to ensure they have the resources to be a strong voice for their communities. In particular, Local Governments must have both long term and short-term strategies in place to ensure they operate in a manner which is financially sustainable.
- The Queensland Government provides a range of funding programs to Local Governments. Such funding programs are developed and implemented to support the financial sustainability of Local Governments and deliver benefits for advancing Queensland local communities.

3.9 Guaranteed constitutional recognition

- The Queensland Government will maintain the recognition of Local Government in the *Constitution of Queensland 2001* and guarantee the continuation of a Local Government system in Queensland.

4. Partnership roles and responsibilities

4.1 Shared roles and responsibilities

The Parties have the common objective of enhancing the wellbeing of communities throughout Queensland with shared and overlapping jurisdictions.

Under this Agreement, both Parties will:

- Seek opportunities to partner and work co-operatively, including joint planning, policy development and the joint delivery of programs.
- Recognise that each has a responsibility to ensure Local Governments are financially sustainable.
- Agree that relations between the Parties should be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation with an emphasis on equal partnership—a commitment to timely and frequent communication and with recognition of each other's roles and responsibilities.
- Where necessary, negotiate specific agreements and alliances in accordance with the intent and principles of this Agreement including, but not limited to, the Rural and Remote Councils Compact, the Indigenous Council Leaders Accord and also the Roads and Transport Coordination Accord, which are addendums to this Agreement. The Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers and the LGAQ maintain an up-to-date register of known agreements.
- Agree to work together on matters raised by the Australian Government which impact on Local Government.
- Work together on agreed initiatives which promote Government's objectives for the community.
- Agree to keep supporting the important partnership between the State and Local Government in disaster management across the full spectrum of prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and resilience. This includes recognition of the role of Local Disaster Management Groups and the LGAQ's seat on the Queensland Disaster Management Committee.

4.2 Queensland Government roles and responsibilities

Under this Agreement, the Queensland Government will:

- Maintain a flexible and responsive system of Local Government in Queensland which meets community needs and expectations and reflects the underlying principles in this Agreement.
- Create an environment where the Local Government sector is empowered, including through fit for purpose legislation
- Ensure local government is held to high levels of integrity and accountability, while enabling councillors to serve their community without unnecessary regulatory burden
- Demonstrate a commitment to good governance, a high standard of ethics and integrity, giving rise to community confidence in the State Government.
- Undertake timely and meaningful consultation on all policy, legislation, strategy and program initiatives where Local Government has an interest, with where practicable, a minimum consultation period of four weeks to allow the LGAQ to engage meaningfully with its members.
- Ensure timely and meaningful engagement with individual councils when making decisions that directly impact their local government area.
- Promote awareness of the Agreement amongst all Queensland Government departments, ensuring whole of government commitment to the agreed principles.

4.3 Local Government roles and responsibilities

Under this Agreement, Local Government will:

- Demonstrate a commitment to good governance, a high standard of ethics and integrity, giving rise to community confidence in Local Government.
- Demonstrate they are doing the right things in the right way, always making decisions in the public interest.
- Recognise it is responsible for strategic planning and asset maintenance, designed to ensure sound financial management, a healthy balance sheet and an adequate revenue base relative to their revenue raising capacity.
- Undertake timely, cooperative, proper and meaningful engagement with the Queensland Government, where practicable, on all matters where the Queensland Government has an interest.

5. Operation and review of the Equal Partners in Government Agreement

This Agreement will remain in operation for three years from the date of signing. Meetings to review the operation of the Agreement may be held as required at the request of the Queensland Government or the LGAQ. Changes may be made from time to time by mutual agreement.

The Premier will meet with the LGAQ on at least a six-monthly basis and more frequently as warranted. At these meetings, the Parties will discuss key outcomes achieved under the Agreement, including progress against Government's objectives for the community, election commitments and the LGAQ's Annual Conference Resolutions and Annual Advocacy Action Plan.

The Minister for Local Government will meet with the LGAQ Executive a minimum of four times per year.

