



Gabrielle Upton
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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CRACKDOWN ON BADLY BEHAVED COUNCILLORS

The NSW Government has proposed tough new Code of Conduct requirements for local NSW councils.

Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton said the updated *Model Code of Conduct* for Councils in NSW – which would apply to 1,500 councillors and almost 50,000 council staff across NSW – was now on public exhibition for comment.

“While most councillors do the right thing for a small minority it is all about them instead of what is in the community’s best interests. We are determined to weed out councillors misusing their public office,” Ms Upton said.

“Breaches of the new Code of Conduct by councillors can result in suspension and even disqualification from office and these new proposed requirements will put an even greater onus on councillors to behave appropriately or face the consequences if they don’t serve their ratepayers.”

The new Model Code of Conduct proposes a range of new rules for all councillors and staff, including:

- Banning accepting gifts or benefits greater than \$50 and introducing mandatory reporting of all gifts or benefits regardless of value;
- Disclosing records of meetings and other communications with applicants and objectors to planning applications;
- Banning access to council information when councillors have a pecuniary or a significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest;
- Requiring the declaration of new interests by councillors and staff more regularly in official returns of interest;
- Declaring being a property developer or a close associate of a property developer more regularly in official returns of interest;
- Publishing information in councillor and general manager official returns of interest on council’s website;
- Tough new standards against bullying, discrimination and harassment, work health and safety, on behaviour at meetings and use of social media;
- Clarifying that councillors must not use council information for personal purposes or undertake personal dealings with council during work time.

The draft *Model Code of Conduct* is on public exhibition for six weeks.

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