

MEDIA STATEMENT

Local governance structure must meet 21st Century demands

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The Committee for Perth welcomes the Premier & Minister for Local Government's announcement advising the establishment of an expert panel to assess Perth's future social, economic and environmental requirements and the most appropriate local governance model to address these challenges.

CEO Marion Fulker said the Committee for Perth is an advocate for local government reform and welcomed the announcement as a positive step towards establishing a strong and effective 21st century governance structure for metropolitan Perth.

"Local Government reform has been a long standing area of focus for the Committee for Perth because we believe that the current system of some 30 local governments across the metropolitan region will hinder our potential to address our future challenges particularly in relation to an increasing growth in population" Mrs Fulker said.

She further said that research undertaken by the Committee has indicated that governance structures have an impact on the economic development and global competitiveness of a city and it is therefore critical to Perth's future planning that we have an effective governance model in place.

"Perth is facing an unprecedented population growth with government predicting that we will be a metropolis of 3.5 million by 2050. It is therefore vital that we have an effective governance structure if the city is to remain highly liveable and globally competitive while doubling in size. .

Reviewing the terms of reference for the review, Mrs Fulker said that the panel had a big task ahead of it as it seeks to identify Perth's future needs and challenges and the most appropriate structure to meet these head on.

"Change is afoot across the world through the impacts of globalisation and the technological revolution along with a fundamental shift in the economic powerbase towards Asia and strong demographic trends such as the ageing of the world's population.

"Perth is currently at a crossroads as we transform from a small city to a much larger one and governments need to take all these varying factors into consideration now as they are fundamental to shaping the Perth of the future.

"We are at a critical time when governments need to ensure the adequate provision of timely and scalable hard and soft infrastructure that will serve the community and the region well as we grow and adapt to change" Mrs Fulker said.

Marion Fulker further commented that Committee for Perth research has shown that there are a number of successful local governance models both within Australia and overseas which the panel could draw upon during the course of its work.

“Our research has shown that there are a range of successful local governance models which could be considered. There is the large single local government authority in Brisbane, the recently deployed “super city” in Auckland or there is the Greater London Authority model.

“This latter model left the Borough (local) governments in place however established a single body to address issues which crossed boundaries and affected the Greater London region as a whole such as the provision of public transport to reduce the capacity for parochial interests” she said.

Marion Fulker said that the Committee for Perth welcomes the opportunity to participate in this reform initiative and looks forward to the release of the panel’s recommendations at the end of its deliberations in June 2012.

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