Mayor Kevin Knight  
City of Tea Tree Gully  
PO Box 571  
MODSBURY SA 5092

Dear Mayor Knight

On 20 February 2019, the Premier and I held a roundtable discussion with 45 Mayors from across South Australia to discuss potential local government reform. I found the discussion at the Roundtable on local government reform most valuable as I consider legislative review over the course of 2019.

As I mentioned on the day, there are several areas of local government and activity that I think could benefit from a fresh look and sensible reform. These are:

**Stronger council member capacity and better conduct**
I am aware that the Code of Conduct for Council Members needs to be reviewed. This is an important tool that can assist all council members to act in the best interests of their communities, and to ensure that their decisions are always made with the highest standards of integrity. However, I would like the legislative review to extend beyond the role of a formal Code to consider what tools councils need to ensure that relationships amongst their members are constructive, and that all council members have the knowledge and skills to perform their roles.

**Lower costs and enhanced financial accountability**
I also aim to ensure that the legislative provisions that guide all councils’ financial accountability deliver a system of local government that your constituents see as robust, sustainable and transparent. This will ensure that the people who provide the taxes you rely on are both fully informed of your council’s performance, and feel confident in your operations and position.

**Efficient and transparent local government representation**
I will also incorporate a review of the 2018 local government elections within this broader reform program. This review may consider all aspects of local government elections, including voting methods, timing of elections, the role of candidate donations and information provided to voters.

**Simpler regulation**
Finally, I also see a broad based review of the *Local Government Act 1999* as an opportunity to identify statutory requirements whose costs outweigh their public benefits. I would appreciate hearing of any ideas you may have on possible legislative improvements that allow your council to better focus on the services that your community values most.
Prior to developing any proposals for legislative reform, I would like to hear all ideas for improvements from across the local government sector. I therefore invite you and your council to submit any feedback on the above four reform areas, or suggestions for other improvements that you think should be considered.


To maximise the value of your contribution, I would appreciate your considered ideas for reform that include an appropriate level of detail and identifies possible solutions that focus on real benefits to your ratepayers and communities.

You may wish to note that I will also request ideas for local government reform from the community more widely. I encourage your community to contribute to the reform conversation at YourSAy.

Following the consideration of all ideas, it is my intention to release a paper in mid-2019 that discusses ideas and opportunities within the four reform areas and other reforms that may arise through consultation with the sector and communities. This will enable further discussion proposals for reform before a Local Government Reform Amendment Bill is developed in early 2020.

However, if matters are identified that can bring immediate benefit to councils and their communities, I will consider taking an initial reform Bill forward in mid-2019. You may wish to comment on such improvements in any submission you make.

You may also wish to note that I have written to all South Australian council members, as I am keen to highlight the opportunity this reform program brings to improve local government, and to maximise my engagement with all councils.

I look forward to working with you, your council and your communities as we identify and progress real improvements to the system of local government in our State.

Yours sincerely

HON STEPHAN KNOLL MP
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MINISTER FOR PLANNING

3 March 2019