



Growing Perth

Discussions about metropolitan local government reform have put renewed focus on Perth itself and its role as the State's capital city.

The Metropolitan Local Government Review panel noted at the start of its report that the city is on the cusp of a period of change due to population growth and economic development.

With the recent shift in global power, Perth now holds a more strategic global position, closer to the Asian economic powerhouses than other Australian states.

The report highlighted the need to establish structures and frameworks that will accommodate the changes so Perth is enhanced by its development rather than struggling to keep pace.

Perth in focus

The message was reinforced last week during a two-day program of discussions centring on local government reform and its importance to the future of Perth and its people.

The program was organised by the Committee for Perth who invited speakers who have been closely involved in major local government reform initiatives around Australia and in New Zealand.

The visitors were former New Zealand Minister for Local Government, Rodney Hide; former Chief Executive Officer of the City of Brisbane, Jude Munro; former Executive

Chairman for the Auckland Transition Agency, Mark Ford and former Legal Advisor for Auckland Transition Agency, Rob Fisher.

Looking to the future

The visitors provided frank insight into the different reform programs and the way in which they were implemented.

A key message was that we need to consider what Perth is going to be like in 50 years' time and what needs to be done to make sure the city keeps pace with the growth and new challenges ahead.

This was an early consideration outlined by former New Zealand Minister for Local Government, Rodney Hide.

"My reasoning was: Here is Auckland now. If we are not meeting the challenges we are having now, it is certainly not going to work in 50 years' time," he said.

Minister's meetings

Local Government Minister Tony Simpson is continuing his meetings with local governments and other stakeholders to discuss reform considerations.

His meetings last week included with representatives from the Shire of Mundaring and the towns of Claremont, Cambridge and Nedlands.

He also spoke at a dinner for business people organised by the Committee for Perth as part of the two-day program focussing on local government reform.

During his speech, Mr Simpson said Perth's metropolitan area was growing faster than ever before.

"It will reach about 2.3 million by 2026. Yet our council boundaries are almost the same as in the early 1900s when Perth's population was about 73,000," he said.

"In that time we've seen so much change. There's no doubt the roles and demands on local governments have also changed.

"We must make sure we have strong more effective and financially secure local governments.

“It is essential if we are going to meet the changing needs of our communities in the 21st Century. I want to make sure our local governments are well placed to handle the demands of growth.”

This update is provided by the Department of Local Government and Communities. If you have any queries, please contact the Department on 08 6551 8700 or metroreform@dlgc.wa.gov.au. More information about metropolitan local government reform is also available on the Department of Local Government and Communities website.

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