

# Local governments

Councils were formed in Australia to provide many of the services needed by local communities, such as roads, rubbish removal and street lighting.

Each state and territory is divided into a number of local areas. Although known by different names, such as shire or municipality, each is run by a local council, led by a person, often the Mayor or President. Australians all live in one; it could be a rural town and its surrounding countryside, or part of a large capital city.

As in all levels of Australian government, local councillors are elected. Voting is not compulsory and only residents are eligible to vote. Each councillor is elected to represent the people from a particular area, known as a ward. Councillors regularly attend meetings, which are open to the public. Rules made at these meetings are called bylaws.

Some of the money for local councils comes from federal, state and territory governments. Rates are also paid to local councils by landowners.

Councillors serve a four-year term and do not receive any payment for their services. Some of their expenses may, however, be reimbursed by the council.

1. Why do you think anyone would want to be elected to a local government council knowing they won't be paid for their time and effort?

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2. Write one similarity and two differences between state or territory government and local government.

- similarity \_\_\_\_\_
- difference \_\_\_\_\_
- difference \_\_\_\_\_

3. Research your local government.

- (a) Name of council:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Address and phone number:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Leader's title and name:  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Find out about a local issue that involved your council.

- (a) What was the issue?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (b) How do you know about it?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (c) What happened?  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Researching **A** Analysing **ER** Evaluating and reflecting  
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