

SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO DISCUSSION PAPER PART C

This response relates specifically to the proposed amendments outlined in Part C regarding councillor code of conduct.

BACKGROUND

Katherine is the third-largest municipality in the Northern Territory and is an important hub supporting tourism, agriculture, cultural and defence industries. The population in Katherine is about 10,000. Around 8,000 people live in the Katherine municipality. Around six per cent work in defence at the nearby RAAF Base Tindal, adding about 2,000 additional people.

Katherine is also a centre for residents of the surrounding Big Rivers Region coming to town for services such as medical, retail and more. The Big Rivers Region, centred on the township of Katherine, has a total population of over 21,000 and includes 23 Aboriginal communities and town camps.

Despite having a relatively small population, Katherine is also the central hub providing services to communities from the Western Australia border to the Gulf of Carpentaria and other parts of the Northern Territory.

Katherine Town Council (KTC) has seven elected members consisting of one full-time Mayor and six part-time Councillors. The Mayor is directly elected by the community.

CURRENT ISSUES

Councillors perform an important leadership role within their local communities and have a responsibility to act in a way that reflects community values and expectations. While elected representatives generally conduct themselves with professionalism, integrity, and dedication to their community, KTC has unfortunately experienced instances in which councillor conduct has fallen well short of these expectations.

KTC has recently been dealing with the inappropriate behaviour of one elected member within the current code of conduct breach arrangements, with little success in satisfactorily resolving the issue. The poor behaviour, and the inability to adequately manage it, has strained relationships between elected members and impacted significantly on their ability to operate in harmony, wasted significant resources and hindered the Chief Executive Officer undertaking their role in a professional, respectful manner.

These instances have highlighted limitations in the existing legislative framework for holding elected members accountable to a standard that the community expects of its council officials.

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RESPONSE TO DISCUSSION PAPER

Good governance is essential for effective, efficient, and well-run local government. It underpins and provides for sound decision-making, accountability, and transparency.

The failings and inadequacies of the current breach system need to be addressed and KTC is generally supportive of the proposals outlined in the Discussion Paper. Specific responses to each section of the Discussion Paper are outlined below, and a summary of KTC's position is provided at the end.

Code of Conduct Framework

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>What is the proposed structure or nature of the Code of Conduct framework?</i>	<i>A mandatory framework with core components legislated, supported by departmental guidance and templates.</i>	<i>A structured model with required outcomes but flexible implementation pathways for councils.</i>	<i>A suggested framework only – councils can adopt, adapt, or propose alternative models that meet intent.</i>
<i>How does the framework support culturally safe and place-based approaches?</i>	<i>Councils may adapt education, awareness, and training tools to suit local needs.</i>	<i>The Department will co-design guidance and tools with Aboriginal councils and leaders.</i>	<i>Regionally specific resources will be developed to support remote implementation.</i>
<i>How does this framework align with what other jurisdictions are doing?</i>	<i>It reflects national practice and incorporates best practice from states like Victoria and NSW.</i>	<i>It borrows key elements from other jurisdictions but is tailored to NT needs.</i>	<i>It serves as a reference model but allows for NT-specific flexibility and diversity.</i>

KTC supports Option 1, a mandatory framework with core components legislated, supported by departmental guidance and templates. Allowing flexible pathways does not provide a consistent approach in such a small jurisdiction and places resourcing pressure back on Councils to develop suitable models and supporting guidance.

1.1. Raising awareness of councillor roles and responsibilities

Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia require mandatory training for all candidates nominating for all positions at local government elections or by-elections. Tasmania is currently introducing mandatory training in advance of the October 2026 elections.

In Queensland, the mandatory training is required to be completed by every candidate before nominating prior to every election, regardless of whether they have been a Councillor previously.

This mandatory training is an important tool for candidates seeking nomination to understand what their role is going to be and how they are expected to behave should they be elected. While it is not a panacea for ensuring appropriate behaviour by elected members, this training is an essential first step in candidates committing to appropriate behaviour once elected to ensure they understand the code of conduct, make informed decisions, effectively manage conflicts of interest and understand the consequences for any breaches of the code of conduct.

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Mandatory candidate training as part of the nomination process would assist individuals from diverse backgrounds to recognise the unique, diverse, and challenging roles councillors are expected to undertake, and how to work effectively with people from different and varying backgrounds to achieve outcomes for the community.

KTC strongly supports mandatory local government candidate training as part of the nomination process for local government elections.

1.2. Councillor induction, professional development training and commitment to the Code

As outlined in the Discussion Paper, a consistent approach to induction and training helps set clear expectations and improve councillor conduct over the term.

Currently Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia mandate that specific training modules developed by the relevant local government department are required to be completed within 6 to 12 months post-election. In NSW there is a mandatory induction program. Tasmania is in the process of introducing mandatory councillor training post-election.

While induction at the individual council level is useful and necessary, undertaking compulsory training would ensure elected officials share a common set of core knowledge to enable them to represent their community competently and confidently and improve the overall standard of governance across local government.

Mandatory training modules in other jurisdictions incorporate:

- good governance, professional conduct and commitment to the Code of Conduct
- legal responsibilities (including work health and safety)
- council and committee meeting procedures
- financial management and reporting
- strategic asset management
- council as a planning authority, and
- community engagement, representation, and advocacy.

KTC strongly supports the inclusion of mandatory training of relevant modules developed by the department in consultation with the Local Government Association of the NT (LGANT) and the sector, to be completed by all councillors within 6-12 months post-election.

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1.3. Required training for the Chair and Deputy Chair

As the Discussion Paper states, the leadership roles of the meeting chair (the Mayor) and deputy chair (Deputy Mayor) are the key to managing councillor conduct and maintaining effective meetings. It is the Chair's role to lead meetings, promote high professional standards, monitor behaviour of participants, ensure that everyone is heard and respectful to each other, and to bring everyone together to facilitate decision-making that benefits the community.

Given the diverse educational and professional backgrounds of local government candidates and elected members, it cannot be assumed that individuals have the necessary skills to chair meetings, manage difficult adult behaviour and work as a team to gain consensus.

KTC strongly supports the department developing and providing tailored training for all chairs and deputy chairs that outline the importance of leadership, working as a team, managing difficult behaviours, inclusive chairing and continuous evaluation.

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>Who is best placed to deliver induction, professional development and mandatory training?</i>	<i>The Department delivers consistent training focused on leadership and conduct.</i>	<i>A shared model where the Department accredits regional trainers or peer mentors.</i>	<i>LGANT or councils lead with Department-approved materials.</i>
<i>What happens if the Chair or Deputy Chair does not complete the training?</i>	<i>The Department may take compliance action and recommend removal from the role.</i>	<i>The councillor is ineligible to act as Chair until the training is completed.</i>	<i>The Minister may intervene if non-compliance persists.</i>

KTC supports a mixture of options outlined above, as follows:

- **Department delivers consistent mandatory modules for all councillors, determined in consultation with LGANT and the broader local government sector**
- **Department delivers tailored training for meeting chairs and deputy chairs**
- **Individual Councils deliver place-based induction about Council operations and work with elected members to develop personal professional development plans.**

KTC supports Option 2 in relation to non-completion of the meeting chair/deputy chair training, followed by Option 1 then Option 3.

1.4. Council Governance Checks

According to the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), annual board evaluations are now commonplace for both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations across the globe. Board and individual director evaluations are critical because individuals and groups need feedback on performance if they are to continue to grow and improve. There are few business units, work teams or employees in well-run businesses who are not subject to the regular discipline of performance evaluations. These evaluations allow companies, groups and individuals to reflect on past performance and encourage continuous improvement.

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KTC strongly supports the development of tools to enhance the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct framework across the local government sector to support and enhance the additional training and skills provided to elected members.

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>Are governance checks mandatory or optional?</i>	<i>Mandatory twice per year.</i>	<i>Required but with flexible tools and timing.</i>	<i>Voluntary but may be directed where governance issues exist.</i>
<i>Who is best placed to conduct the governance check?</i>	<i>Independent reviewers appointed by the council.</i>	<i>The council uses a Department-approved self-assessment tool.</i>	<i>The Department appoints reviewers in high-risk cases.</i>

KTC supports a combination of options:

- **mandatory annual evaluation of performance along a continuum:**
 - **self-assessment model (to be developed and administered by LGANT)**
 - **any significant issues trigger an independent reviewer chosen from a panel established by the department**
 - **if further issues identified, then external review by the department.**

1.5. Early intervention - Standing Council Governance and Code Committee

The Discussion Paper proposes an ‘early’ intervention model called a Standing Council Governance and Code Committee (SGCC) to deal with complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct.

As it currently stands, Part 5.2 of the *Local Government Act 2019*, (the Act) requires committees of Council to be established by resolution, including a term of reference. The proposed establishment of the SGCC in the manner suggested in the discussion paper (that is, with a mandatory two or three elected members and an independent chair) would be complex to implement within current provisions and may not provide the flexibility required to manage inappropriate behaviour or breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Example:

Council established a SGCC and terms of reference by resolution, with Councillors XYZ and ABC as council members and an independent chair. An internal complaint is received about the behaviour of Councillor ABC. Clearly Councillor ABC cannot adjudicate as a member of the SGCC about their own behaviour. This means that another Council resolution is required to amend the terms of reference to appoint another Councillor in place of Councillor ABC.

The terminology “Standing Council Governance and Code Committee (SGCC)” and the need for a Council resolution to establish the committee and its terms of reference is unwieldy and confusing. Victoria applies a relatively simple Council Internal Resolution Procedure (CIRP). This Procedure provides both parties to a dispute with support and encouragement to resolve the dispute in a manner that enables the Councillors to move forward and maintain effective working relationships, led by the Mayor. It is designed to minimise cost

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and disruption of disputes to Council and individual councillors and, where possible, avoid disputes escalating and becoming the subject of arbitration or alternative dispute resolution.

The CIRP process allows elected members to explain their respective positions and, in a show of goodwill, actively explore the possibility of resolving the dispute by agreement. Under the model, disputes can be resolved, abandoned or escalated to an external party. In resolving complaints, the Mayor could dismiss the complaint, require an elected member to apologise or undertake further training or escalate for further resolution (to alternative dispute resolution or the Independent Assessor). Complaints about a Mayor are always escalated outside of Council.

Another concern with the SGCC process is the potential for increased conflict between elected members and bias (toward or against) the committee members colleagues. There is an inherent human emotional conflict where individuals consider complaints about, and then adjudicate, colleagues of equal standing in a professional setting. It cannot be done in an objective way, as emotions and previous experiences with their colleagues will always prejudice the views of committee members.

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>Is the SGCC mandatory for all councils?</i>	<i>Yes, all councils must establish one.</i>	<i>Mandatory but flexible in structure for small councils.</i>	<i>Optional for low-risk councils; Department steps in otherwise.</i>
<i>How will councils source independent members or Chairs?</i>	<i>Department maintains a vetted panel.</i>	<i>Councils nominate and vet own candidates.</i>	<i>Councils join regional pools to share members.</i>

KTC supports the introduction of a ‘discussion and conciliation’ model similar to the Victorian Council Internal Resolution Procedure (CIRP). KTC does not support the SGCC model outlined in the discussion paper.

1.6. Independent Assessor

Given the inherent difficulties in adjudicating colleagues outlined above and noting that not all disputes may be resolved through the proposed ‘discussion and conciliation’ model, it is important that an independent review process is available for elected members.

Referrals to the Independent Assessor can only be undertaken after the early intervention stage has been completed, or the complaint is about the Mayor. Further, as recently introduced in Queensland, timeframes for dealing with matters should be established, to ensure that disputes are handled in a timely manner.

KTC supports the Independent Assessor role of providing an external triage for complaints and resolution options as outlined in the Discussion Paper. The Independent Assessor must have relevant skills and strong experience in local government (but not be a current elected member or employee of a local government in the NT).

While KTC supports an Independent Assessor model and the capacity to apply ‘low-level’ penalties, it does not support the Independent Assessor being vested with additional powers to apply penalties such as suspension from Council, withholding of allowance or disqualification from running for council. These penalties should be

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applied by a Code of Conduct Panel or the Minister, following an investigation and recommendations from the Independent Assessor.

(KTC notes the discussion paper references a single Independent Assessor but then suggests there would be multiple Assessors. While an appointed single Independent Assessor model, as implemented in Queensland, would be preferred, KTC understands this may not be feasible in a small jurisdiction and that a panel of suitably qualified individuals may be appropriate to undertake the Independent Assessor role).

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>How should Independent Assessors be engaged?</i>	<i>Council uses a Department-endorsed panel.</i>	<i>Shared regional model with pooled assessors.</i>	<i>Councils nominate assessors with vetting.</i>
<i>When should an Independent Assessor be engaged?</i>	<i>Councils must work through early intervention strategies before escalating</i>	<i>Only serious matters to be referred; less serious matters can progress if early intervention strategies are unsuccessful</i>	<i>All complaints go to the Assessor for triage.</i>
<i>Do councils with strong governance teams need to use external assessors for low-level matters?</i>	<i>No, SGCC can manage low-level issues internally.</i>	<i>Only serious matters must be referred.</i>	<i>All complaints go to the Assessor for triage.</i>

KTC supports Option 1, where Independent Assessors are engaged through a department-endorsed panel of suitably qualified individuals.

KTC supports Option 1, where a ‘discussion and conciliation’ or early intervention process is applied before disputes are escalated (where resolution of the dispute is unsuccessful) or where the complaint is about the Mayor.

KTC does not support the use of council-employed governance officers/teams of team members undertaking a role in assessing complaints from elected members about breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct. Further, how would a ‘strong’ governance team be assessed?

1.7. Escalation to Code of Conduct Panel

KTC supports the establishment of a Code of Conduct Panel to assess and decide only complaints referred to it from the Independent Assessor that have been judged to be of a substantial, more serious nature.

The Panel should be comprised of at least three people from a pre-selected list, with the Panel Chair being an Australian lawyer who has been admitted to the legal profession for at least 5 years (or ideally a member of the Bar Association of the NT), with a number of other members with extensive experience in local government (but not current elected members), administrative law, governance and public administration. It might be useful to target members of Councillor Conduct panels already established in other jurisdictions such as Victoria and Queensland.

It is unclear in the Discussion Paper what the trigger for a panel is, i.e. through what mechanism and at what point in the process the panel is engaged to undertake their work? There needs to be a clear decision-maker to appoint panel members for a matter, with members selected from list of pre-determined (by the department)

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suitably qualified panel members. KTC suggests that if a Conduct Panel is required (depending on what the trigger for that would be in the legislation), that panel members be engaged by the Chief Executive Officer of the local government department.

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>Who appoints members to the Panel?</i>	<i>Department appoints based on expertise of members relevant to the complaint.</i>	<i>Councils nominate to a central pool.</i>	<i>Regional appointment model via joint agreement.</i>
<i>How are decisions enforced?</i>	<i>Council implements with Department oversight.</i>	<i>Non-compliance triggers regulatory action.</i>	<i>Department steps in for high-level penalties.</i>

KTC supports Option 1, where panel members are pre-selected by the Department and engaged by the Chief Executive Officer of the local government department.

KTC supports Option 1 for lower-level penalties applied through the ‘discussion and conciliation’ and Independent Assessor processes, and Option 3 for penalties applied through the Conduct Panel or Minister.

1.7.1. Code of Conduct Panel Findings Implemented

The heading of this section is confusing, as it relates to the application of all findings, not just findings from the Code of Conduct Panel.

Consequences for breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct must be along a continuum based upon seriousness of the breach, whether remedial action already imposed has been undertaken and how often the breach is repeated. For instance, where repeated breaches occur, it is futile to continue imposing training or counselling where the behaviour is clearly not being remedied.

Sanctions and penalties should always reflect the seriousness of a matter and whether efforts to resolve matters have already been attempted. For example, in Queensland, if a councillor received orders for unsuitable meeting conduct three times in one year, the repeated nature of the behaviour is considered a conduct breach and escalated to the Independent Assessor.

Penalties of suspension, disqualification from running for council and withholding allowances should only be imposed by the Minister upon recommendation from the Code of Conduct Panel. These penalties should only be applied at the upper end of the continuum for serious and/or repeated breaches, in line with the escalation process to higher adjudication of breaches.

The imposition of fines would require offence provisions and are administratively burdensome.

The Discussion Paper does not provide sufficient information about the purpose of the Governance Controller or its application as a ‘penalty’, as outlined in the table on Page 18.

KTC supports the following remedial measures/penalties for breaches, following timely consideration of complaints:

- **Dismiss complaint**
- **Take no action**

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- Reprimand
- Request apology from elected member
- Remedial orders under the Act for 1) Training or counselling and/or 2) Mediation/conciliation
- Removal from position as council representative/Chair of delegated committee (Independent Assessor and Conduct Panel)

KTC supports the following penalties being applied by the Minister following consideration and recommendations made by the Conduct Panel:

- Ineligible to hold office of Mayor/ Deputy Mayor for up to 12 months
- Suspension
- Disqualification from running for council
- Withhold allowance

KTC **does not** support the Governance Controller (simply because there is insufficient information about the function of this role and how it would be implemented) or the imposition of fines.

1.8. Resourcing and Costs

To reduce the burden on taxpayers, minimise frivolous/vexatious complaints and avoid 'weaponisation' of the complaints system, it is appropriate that costs are shared amongst the NT Government, councils and complainants. However, this must be balanced with the cost of administering a payment system. If payments are received by the NT Government, then it would be appropriate for them to cover costs. If payments are made to the individual Council, then it would be appropriate for the Council to cover costs.

KTC supports complainants paying a fee based on the reasonable cost of considering (assessing, investigating and making a determination about) a complaint, and this should be a scheduled fee in the Local Government Regulation. However, KTC recognises the fee level may be difficult to determine as the costs of handling complaints will escalate as complaints are escalated through the process, and the fee would ordinarily be collected at the time the initial complaint is made. Alternatively, as complaints are escalated, it may be appropriate for costs to be recovered from the complainant (noting this would be administratively burdensome).

Assuming that councils receive the fee for lodgement of a complaints, KTC supports council covering the cost of utilising the Independent Assessor and Conduct Panel.

As outlined in the Discussion Paper, an important part of the Code framework is investing in support and prevention. It is essential the NT Government invests considerably more resources to governance and integrity training for elected members as a preventive measure. KTC strongly supports this approach.

1.9. Elected Mayors

This matter is considered in a separate response from KTC in relation to Chapter 5, Discussion Paper Part B.

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1.10. Media Policy

KTC currently has a Council media policy approved through resolution in which the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer are the key media spokespeople to comment publicly on Council business. The policy does recognise that an individual Councillor may have a view that differs from the official Council position and Councillors who express personal views should qualify their remarks to indicate this is a personal view.

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>Is a single-spokesperson policy mandatory?</i>	<i>Yes, for consistency and risk mitigation.</i>	<i>Mandatory media policy, flexible in approach.</i>	<i>Council decides under broad guidelines.</i>
<i>Will media training be required?</i>	<i>Strongly encouraged for all members.</i>	<i>Mandatory for Mayor and Chair only.</i>	<i>Optional and left to councils.</i>

KTC supports Option 2, whereby a media policy is mandatory, but the approach can be flexible and determined by council through resolution.

KTC supports Option 3 for media training, as this would depend on the skill level of the spokesperson.

1.11. Eligibility/Disqualification

Consideration of eligibility or disqualification must only be made at the upper end of the continuum of penalties based on the seriousness of a breach or repeated breaches where the individual has not undertaken remedial action if it has been required and should only be applied by the Minister.

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>What behaviours trigger disqualification?</i>	<i>Serious misconduct or repeated breaches.</i>	<i>Code Panel or Minister recommendation.</i>	<i>Criminal findings aligned with thresholds.</i>
<i>Will fairness and cultural factors be considered?</i>	<i>Yes, via process and input from community.</i>	<i>Panel may request cultural context.</i>	<i>Local references may inform decisions.</i>

KTC supports Option 1 and Option 2, where only serious or repeated breaches trigger consideration of a penalty of ineligibility or disqualification, where these penalties are recommended by the Conduct Panel and applied by the Minister.

KTC supports Option 2 and 3 in relation to cultural context for these penalties.

1.12. Defining Levels of Complaints

The model must provide a clear distinction between non-serious or trivial breaches, and serious or repeated breaches. It would be useful for the legislation to be clear on the issue of breach categories and definitions, as the approach to dealing with more serious breaches and applying any penalties that may flow from a breach (or repeated breaches) will depend on the circumstances of each matter and the alignment to Parliament's intention of 'serious'.

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Further, the legislation or guidance material must be clear that any complaints that involve suspected improper conduct must immediately be referred to the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC) as required under s.22 of the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017* and not dealt with through any 'early' intervention methods.

Behaviour contrary to the Code of Conduct that occurs within a council or committee meeting should be dealt with immediately during the meeting by the Chair. Queensland provides guidelines for how unsuitable meeting conduct can be handled. This is not considered a breach of the Code, unless the behaviour is repeated three times within one year.

Clarification Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<i>Who determines complaint classification?</i>	<i>Independent Assessor.</i>	<i>SGCC advises; Assessor confirms.</i>	<i>Joint tool with shared criteria.</i>
<i>Can councils customise complaint levels?</i>	<i>No – standard model must be used.</i>	<i>Minor variation allowed with approval.</i>	<i>Local use allowed, but decisions follow NT-wide system.</i>

KTC supports Option 3, with the department providing guidance material in relation to the factors to consider when assessing a complaint and the seriousness of the issue. See examples from Queensland and New South Wales.

https://www.localgovernment.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/44233/councillor-complaints-factsheet.pdf

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Framework-For-Managing-Councillor-Misconduct-Allegations.pdf>

KTC supports Option 1, where a standard model of classification is used across the NT.

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SUMMARY OF KTC'S POSITION

Katherine Town Council supports:

- a mandatory framework with core components legislated, supported by departmental guidance and templates
- mandatory local government candidate training as part of the nomination process for local government elections
- the inclusion of mandatory training of relevant modules developed by the department in consultation with LGANT and the sector, to be completed by all councillors within 6-12 months post-election
- the department developing and providing tailored training for all chairs and deputy chairs that outline the importance of leadership, working as a team, managing difficult behaviours, inclusive chairing and continuous evaluation
- the department delivering consistent mandatory modules for all councillors, determined in consultation with LGANT and the broader local government sector; the department delivering tailored training for meeting chairs and deputy chairs; and individual councils delivering place-based induction about Council operations and working with elected members to develop personal professional development plans
- a councillor being unable to undertake the role of Chair unless mandatory training has been completed
- the development of tools to enhance the effectiveness of the Code framework across the local government sector to support and enhance the additional training and skills provided to elected members, including mandatory annual evaluation of performance along a continuum:
 - self-assessment model (to be developed and administered by LGANT)
 - any significant issues trigger an independent reviewer chosen from a panel established by the department
 - if further issues identified, then external review by the department
- the introduction of a 'discussion and conciliation' model similar to the Victorian Council Internal Resolution Procedure (CIRP) rather than the proposed SGCC model
- the Independent Assessor role of providing an external triage for complaints and resolution options as outlined in the Discussion Paper
- Independent Assessors being engaged through a department-endorsed panel of suitably qualified individuals
- a 'discussion and conciliation' or early intervention process being applied before disputes are escalated to the Independent Assessor (where resolution of the dispute is unsuccessful) or where the complaint is about the Mayor
- the establishment of a Code of Conduct Panel to assess and decide only complaints referred to it from the Independent Assessor that have been judged to be of a substantial, more serious nature
- Code of Conduct Panel members being pre-selected by the department and engaged by the Chief Executive Officer of the local government department
- decision enforcement by Council for lower-level penalties applied through the 'discussion and conciliation' and Independent Assessor processes, and the department for penalties applied through the Conduct Panel or Minister
- the following remedial measures/penalties for breaches, following timely consideration of complaints:

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- Dismiss complaint
- Take no action
- Reprimand
- Request apology from elected member
- Remedial orders under the Act for 1) Training or counselling and/or 2) Mediation/conciliation
- Removal from position as council representative/Chair of delegated committee (Independent Assessor and Conduct Panel)
- the following penalties being applied by the Minister following consideration and recommendations made by the Conduct Panel:
 - Ineligible to hold office of Mayor/ Deputy Mayor for up to 12 months
 - Suspension
 - Disqualification from running for council
 - Withhold allowance
- complainants paying a fee based on the reasonable cost of considering (assessing, investigating and making a determination about) a complaint, and this should be a scheduled fee in the Local Government Regulation. However, KTC recognises the fee level may be difficult to determine as the costs of handling complaints will escalate as complaints are escalated through the process, and the fee would ordinarily be collected at the time the initial complaint is made
- council covering the cost of utilising the Independent Assessor and Conduct Panel, assuming that councils receive the fee for lodgement of a complaints
- a mandatory media policy where the approach can be flexible and determined by council through resolution, and media training provided on an as-needs basis depending on the skill level of the spokesperson
- that only serious or repeated breaches trigger consideration of a penalty of ineligibility or disqualification, where these penalties are recommended by the Conduct Panel and applied by the Minister
- the Conduct Panel using cultural context and local references when considering matters and making recommendations about eligibility or disqualification
- the department providing guidance material in relation to the factors to consider when assessing a complaint and the seriousness of the issue to determine the categorisation of a complaint, and
- a standard model of classification being used across the NT.

Katherine Town Council does not support:

- the SGCC model outlined in the discussion paper
- the use of council-employed governance officers/teams of team members undertaking a role in assessing complaints from elected members about breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct, and
- the Governance Controller (simply because there is insufficient information about the function of this role and how it would be implemented) or the imposition of fines as penalties under the framework.