

WHAT IS LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

Local Government, or Council, is the tier of government closest to the community. It is often referred to as the 'grass-roots' level of government, as Council responds to the needs of the local area.

WHAT DOES LOCAL GOVERNMENT DO?

Local government is responsible for working to improve the quality of life for all members of the community, and "allocate resources in a fair, socially inclusive, and sustainable way". (Section 11 Local Government Act, 2008)

You may not realise how often you access Council services:

It's Saturday morning. You ride your bike to the **foreshore** with your family, carefully crossing the **roads** along the way. You ride along the **cyclepath** to the **park** - the kids play on the **playground** while the adults cook lunch on the **public BBQ** or read a book borrowed from the **library**. After lunch you stop for a dip at the public pool. As the sun begins to set you ride home safely under the glow of the **streetlights**.

All of these services and facilities are provided and maintained by Council.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS?

The Lord Mayor and the Aldermen are elected to represent all ratepayers and residents in the municipality of Darwin. They make decisions about the programs and services Council will provide.

To achieve this, Council Members must be aware of the issues affecting their community, and act as a bridge between community members and Council.

WHO DECIDES WHAT COUNCIL DOES?

The most important person that decides what the Council does is **YOU!** Community input forms a huge part of Council decision making.

The State/Territory Government provides a legal framework for Local Government. This includes regulations on how Council is formed, how meetings should be conducted, and how money should be raised and spent.

However, Council has great freedom in deciding which programs and facilities to fund, and it is community feedback to Council that helps inform these decisions.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Citizens over 18 can:

- Vote in Council elections
- Stand for election for Council

Everyone can:

- Join an advisory committee

- Attend and speak at a council meeting
- Submit feedback to council on an issue
- Speak to an Alderman in your ward
- Create a petition
- Fill in an online survey
- Write to your local member
- Attend a community forum