

INFORMATION SHEET

This sheet has been prepared solely to assist discussions during the Local Government/Aboriginal Service Agreement Project and is to be used only as a guide (updated March 2006).

ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In South Australia 68 individual autonomous Councils provide Local Government [*under the Local Government Act 1999*].

Each Council covers a defined geographic area. Council areas vary in geographic size, population, land use and location. Despite these differences, all Councils, have the same legal powers and responsibilities.

Councils are corporate bodies and are comprised of Council Members, headed by a Principal Member generally called a Mayor or Chairperson. Individual Council Members have no authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council, it is the elected Council as a whole that is the corporate body and has this power.

Some of the roles and functions of a Council set out in the *Local Government Act 1999* are:

- being a representative, informed and responsible decision-maker in the interests of its communities;
- participating in public policy development and planning activities with the other spheres of government;
- providing and coordinating services and facilities that benefit its area, ratepayers, residents and visitors;
- developing its community and resources in a socially just and sustainable manner;
- providing for the welfare, well-being and interests of individuals and groups within its community;
- representing the interests of its community to the wider community and other spheres of government;
- planning at the local and regional level for the development and future requirements of its area;
- managing, developing, protecting, and conserving the environment; and
- regulating local activities such as building, keeping animals, parking, maintaining public health etc. Some of these responsibilities include a law enforcement role.

Source: Local Government Association of SA "So You Want to Be on Council, 2006 Edition