Minister for Local Government, Mr John Ah Kit MLA introduced into Parliament today a wide ranging Local Government Amendment Bill.

"The major elements of the amendment Bill are designed to reduce or minimise the legal differences between municipal councils and community government councils.

"In addition, the Bill will more clearly define the role of presidents and mayors, other elected councillors members and the CEO of the councils.

"The Bill modernises the Act and clearly defines both the roles and responsibilities of councils and elected members," said Mr Ah Kit.

"The Amendment Bill has been developed through extensive consultation with LGANT over a considerable period."

The Bill also introduces a number of innovations, such as allowing a member to attend a meeting, to attend a meeting of Council by tele-conference or other technological means.

With the need for improved accountability by Councils and to ensure effective planning, a new section is proposed to in the Bill that will require all Councils to prepare a three year strategic plan and an annual business plan. Both plans will be reviewed and updated annually.

Other provisions allow for enhanced reporting and financial management.