



Edgewater Community Residents' Association Inc

President Mr Alexis Anderson  
Secretary Mrs Beth Hewitt

28<sup>th</sup> March 2019

RE: The Local Government Act 1995 Review.

As representatives of Edgewater community, many of who have been directly and adversely affected by actions of the City of Joondalup and are deeply concerned by the lack of recognition and true representation of the views and opinions of our local community by both our elected members and the CEO of the City Of Joondalup, we seek to make the following recommendations to the Local Government Act 1995 Review.

Our Association strongly supports the submission to this review of the Marmion, Sorrento, Duncraig Progress and Ratepayers Association Incorporated and their recommendation: **That when the current process of Local Government Act 1995 Review process is finalised and legislation drafted, that it be referred to a parliamentary Committee to allow public hearings and input into the proposed Amended Act.**

The City of Joondalup's own submission to the above review was never provided to its residents and ratepayers, either for public consultation or feedback. In fact, the Elected Members had only a few days to digest the CEO's 270-page report and because of time constraints, were not able to make informed considerations. Our Association believes that the City of Joondalup's submission is unrepresentative of the community's views and should be assessed accordingly.

We vehemently oppose the formation of so called "Beneficial Enterprises" by all Local Governments because financing such enterprises, which would potentially be run by inexperienced public servants with no business training, entrepreneurial experience or business acumen, funded with rate payers money is reckless in the least and foolhardy at best.

Regarding WALGA: The organisation defines itself as *"the voice of Local Government in Western Australia. As the peak industry body, WALGA advocates on behalf of the vast majority WA Local Governments and negotiates service agreements for that sector"*.



WALGA's members are predominantly current Local Government Elected Members and Officers, including CEO's. Community, and impartial opinion, is not represented by this self-serving organisation.

WALGA has become a legislated monopoly and it does not exist to protect the interests of the public, rather just those of Local Government. WALGA's own recommendations to this review limit democracy and community representation and the community's input into decision making. They are a powerful organisation, seeking even greater power to the detriment of the participation of the community in Local Government.

Local Governments are pivotal to presenting the interests and concerns of the community they represent and therefore, should demonstrate democracy in action from election, community engagement, publication and consultation and as such we would recommend the following:

- The WA Electoral Commission should be placed in charge of compulsory Local Government Elections, using a preferential rather than first past the post system.
- All Elected Members and Mayors should be up for election at the same time. The idea of Wards needs to be abolished in metropolitan councils, rather Elected Members should represent the whole of the Local Government's community.
- A limit for all Elected Member terms, including Mayors, should be in place, we would suggest two terms maximum.
- Councils currently pay lip service, at best, to true public consultation. The current guidelines are flawed and create a tick the box mentality, with Councils failing to adequately engage in true public consultation. Such failure to consult leads to ongoing issues, such as the housing Opportunity Areas within the City of Joondalup. Guidelines should be established so that thorough and authentic community consultation is the basis on which decision are made. The current guidelines are flawed and reflect a 'tick the box mentality', with Councils failing to adequately engage in true public consultation. Such failure to consult leads to ongoing issues, such as the Housing Opportunity Areas within the City of Joondalup, a mess created by lack of community consultation prior to decision making.
- The community should be able to clearly and easily understand the information provided by the Local Government. We therefore propose that at Plain English Policy form part of the Regulations, ensuring that all



information, including financial statements, are provided in a clear, easily understood, and consistent way.

- Finally, we believe that Third Party Rights should be given to Local authorities so that the community's interests are part of the decision-making process at both the State Administrative Tribunal and Joint Development Assessment Panel.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this review, and our hope is that it leads to significant improvements to the currently broken system, where WALGA, a simple association, carries the weight of a government department, while the community is dismissed as merely frivolous or vexatious.

Yours sincerely

Edgewater Community Residents Association Inc.