

From: [REDACTED]
To: [DLGSC Act Review](#)
Subject: Stamping out cheating and lying by council executives
Date: Monday, 25 March 2019 2:43:01 PM
Attachments: [MBRC Report Final.pdf](#)
[8089_Final_Draft_Report_City_of_Melville_Bowls_Strategy_2016.pdf](#)

Dear committee

I am making this submission to the review panel in light of events at the City of Melville which involved dishonesty and lying to councillors and ratepayers at the City of Melville.

I have been a ratepayer in Melville for 35 years. I also served in the federal parliament for 13 years including three years as a minister.

The executive promoted, commissioned and released the Bowls Strategy Report (BSR) and have defended it for the last two years even though I and others have labelled it a sham. Along the way they have had a compliant set of councillors who vote as a bloc which removed the check and balance required to end this matter right at the start. This was a major contributing factor to what was to follow. It shows that you can't always rely on part time councillors who get most of their advice from full time public servants to stop the dishonesty I have alleged.

The recommendation that flowed from this report had severe implications for the residents of Melville. The main recommendation was to shift both the Melville Bowling and Recreation Club (MBRC) and the MtPleasant Bowling Club in to a function room at the rear of the Tompkins Park sporting complex.

The BSR based all its findings on pennant bowls only.

This was by design.

There was no consideration of the intra club, social, corporate, barefoot and school bowling activities which are all growing in popularity. Pennant bowls is in decline and because of this it suited the bias that was always intended to be in the report. The MBRC is also the major community centre in the city and the many activities that occur there should have been considered in making a decision on the future of the club.

The MBRC commissioned its own report to consider the veracity and findings of the BSR.

The MBRC report looks at the approach of the City of Cockburn and the success that has seen the local bowling club increase its membership from 300 to 2,400 today. This can happen when the city works with the bowling club to diversify the activities at the club.

Melville by contrast is going to spend in excess of \$10M to destroy two bowling clubs. This was the amount the City of Cockburn spent on their new bowling and community facilities.

The Cockburn club can only "survive and succeed because it has total control over its facilities and financial management." That is the situation now with the MBRC and the recommendation is to go away from this successful model and, without a shred of evidence that it will work force the MBRC in to a corporate model where the constitution hasn't been written and no financial modelling has been done. This is a disgrace. The truth is that if council carries out its plans the MBRC will move from a successful financial model where it does not draw on ratepayers for support to a model where ratepayers will have to support the club. That is the opposite for the reason underlying the sham Bowls Strategy Report. It will also put up rates.

It points out correctly that the overall pessimistic tone of the report (very deliberate in my view) lumps the MBRC in with what has erroneously been described in the BSR as a drop in all forms

of bowls in WA. The fact is that the MBRC as the report says is “far from being in decline the MBRC is successful, well managed and has plans for expansion.”

The MBRC was way ahead of the BSR in making its facilities open to the public. It is a major community centre in its own right hosting a multitude of community groups, sporting and cultural clubs and social functions where over 1,000 people a month attend the club. These are detailed in the report.

“ The BSR contains flaws, contradictions and serious omissions.”

The Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) totally contradicts the BSR on the number of bowlers in WA.

It points out that BSR report was in total conflict with its own SPARS report which indicated that there was a potential future shortage of playing facilities in the city in the period up to 2031. Both of these reports were written by the same author. Two councillors asked for a copy of the SPARS report and were denied access to it. This is even more critical when the executive accepted and recommended to council an unsolicited offer to establish a wave park on 4.5 hectares of prime riverside public open space which is currently occupied by a number of sporting groups.

On the proposed change in premises it notes “ The reality is that a move to the new premises would mean the MBRC would not be financially viable and would have to either close, or become permanently dependant on ratepayer subsidies.’

I have included a copy of the BSR and MBRC reports.

I have made the point at several ratepayer initiated public meetings where up to 800 people attended that if the truthfulness of the information such as that contained in the BSR was released in to the market place governed by ASIC it would attract a criminal prosecution.

I happen to believe that the strict standards of honesty and integrity enforced by legislation in the corporate sector have to be matched in the local government sector.

In both cases what is at risk is public money. In the corporate sector the public may be duped by wrongful information on which they may make an investment decision. At the local government level, in the City of Melville case I have outlined, there is over \$10M of ratepayers money that has been allocated ,and will be wasted, from what I call corrupt information.

In the corporate sector the test on releasing wrongful information is that the person or organisation either " knew or should have known". This should be the test in enforcing honesty and integrity at the local government level.

I have written to the CEO of the City of Melville, Mr Tieleman telling him that it is his responsibility to uphold the governance standards for the city. I have called on him to initiate a rescission motion to reverse the decision taken as a result of the BSR report. The next available council meeting for this is April 2019.

This is an actual case of dishonesty at the City of Melville which is still to reach its conclusion.

The evidence is in the two reports I have attached.

If you do nothing it will happen again.

In conclusion the committee has to ask themselves this question. Are the standards of honesty and integrity in local government as important as they are in the corporate sector ? I think the answer has to be yes.

Regards

Hon. George Gear

