

From: [REDACTED]
To: [DLGSC Act Review](#)
Subject: FW: Local Laws reve
Date: Thursday, 28 March 2019 2:34:03 PM

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 28 March 2019 2:23 PM
To: Luke [REDACTED]
Subject: Local Laws reve

Hi Luke,

It was great talking to you and the other Department of Local Government Staff at the LGPro conference and it is great the DLGSC is taking action but I don't believe it will be effective. And it is for this reason I will not be providing any comment on the Local Government Act 1995 Review because I don't believe these items are at the heart of the issue that Government is facing.

I understand that currently there is no appetite to address this but I need to provide my perspective.

As discussed I believe the issue for Local Government, which then flows through to State and Federal Government along with Developers, the community, private enterprise, officers and elected officials etc is the structure of Local Government.

I have worked in Local Government for seven years where I undertook a Master of Business Leadership where I effectively studied the whole system whilst undertaking my assignments and utilised contemporary Leadership and Management, Organisational Development/Behaviour, Strategic Planning etc and came the conclusion that until someone changes the structure of Local Government the same issues will keep reoccurring which is a significant problem for our society. This issue is wasting tax payer and rate payer funds and will continue until the Government takes significant action.

The current state of affairs leads to extreme inefficiencies within the LGA organisations from many perspectives which I will dot point below:

- Overall LGA's are too small leading to small interest groups being influential rather than a focus being for the community overall,
- Staff, from the CEO to the operational staff are pushed and pulled in many directions as the small focus groups extend their voice on certain issues,
- The arena is very unhealthy for all staff (note the amount of grievances, sick leave and staff turnover),
- Systems and processes are extremely poor, cumbersome, out of date, overlap each other, expensive and not fit for purpose,
 - Little improvement are made here and there such is staffs capacity but the overall problems linger,
- Professional (all) Business Units (such as Engineers, Finance and Planners) are too small leading to only being able to handle day to day activities with no planning,
 - This leads to the ever repeating issue of poor outcomes,

- Are constantly at logger heads with State Government resulting in a lot of wasted time between the State and Local Governments,
- The current system has led to the creation of many rules and regulations which overcomplicate essential services such as roadworks,
- The current system is extremely expensive which leads to poor utilisation of rates and taxes frustrating the community,
- The current system leads CEO's, Directors, Managers etc to not be able to work and act strategically,
- The current system leads to poor planning, poor engineering, poor community services, poor libraries and public facilities at high costs,
- Expensive contracts,
 - Due to having poor systems it is expensive to do business with LGAs therefore contractors put their rates up,
- Staff numbers are limited and are required to perform multiple functions leading to inefficiencies and poor decision making,
 - They don't have the skill and knowledge to Project Manage, Engineer, Contract Manager etc contracts effectively leading to more expensive contracts,
- The monthly Council meetings for 30 Metro LGA's is an extremely expensive exercise,
 - Not just the meeting itself but the effort that goes into preparing for them for, what I deem, to be low level items. But these low level items are what the Council want to come before them so that they can be seen by the community to taking action.
- I could go on and on

In essence, it is this structure which is leading to the behaviours of elected members (EM) to be continually wanting to be seen to be involved in local items (to get votes) that then pull the CEO's, Directors etc into these day to day activities leaving no-one to be acting strategically. This cycle continues no matter how much staff and even EM attempt to plan and engage strategically. These behaviours of EM, from a leadership perspective, are damaging all the way through organisations and essentially they need to be more professional and less influenced by the vocal 5% as they attempt to resolve local issues. This then creates a dynamic of conflict and results in the everlasting disputes. Through this process good people leave, LGAs continually change approaches and decisions resulting in it being difficult for State Gov, private enterprise and developers to engage and plan effectively.

I understand this is not on the agenda as there is currently no appetite but maybe the DLGSC could undertake an assessment of the current situation to obtain a full understanding, study other models across Australia and the world and develop a proposal for State Government to consider. This could include improved services at reduced costs and some services being moved from State Gov. Take Street Lights for example; The current model is extremely inefficient for Western Power, LGA's and very frustrating for the Community and Ministers.

As I am attempting to keep this short and to the point I will finish up with a couple of final items.

Restructuring LGA's would break the existing dynamic which vocal minorities, businesses, developers etc are manipulating and attract a higher calibre of professional leader to the positions of EM, CEOs, Directors etc which will create improved work places, decision making, planning etc.

Unfortunately there is a large amount of complacency within our communities and therefore I believe this needs to be led by State Gov and the DLGSC. Unfortunately LG Reform was poorly handled and wasted a lot of time, money and good intentions and therefore the approach needs to be carefully considered.

Kind Regards,
Phillip Adams

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