

Steve Walker  
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**Review of the Local Government Act 1995.**

Additional information given to Phase One, yet reduced so that it can be put into public view in 2019.

I have attended and written public submissions to several local governments. To varying degrees I have been let down by them all.

**Concerns of local governments:** They ignore you if you are not a ratepayer, or resident. Their easy excuse to ignore you.

**Staff eat up funds.**

An easy way to remedy this is to have skeleton staff during certain years so the Local Government can actually afford money for overdue projects. Yet Staff divisions don't want this.

Take a look every year in the Annual Report of the pay amounts continually increasing upward. It is as if they are in a cosy economic environment cocooned from West Australian reality.

I have seen many staff divisions across several local governments be 'over-aspirational'.

Plus they confuse their personal ambition goals as public goals, and create budgets funds from the LGA pile selfishly for their pet projects.

Plus when the Updated Strategic Community Plan –which included suspect staff nominated stuff which of course was fake forwarded into their ten year Corporate Business Plan

**The Community Strategic Plan.**

Does get suspect when too many LGA staff/divisional ideas are shoved in DESPITE no idea generation from the public. The staff goals, and the staff pet projects.

All I am saying to local governments is own up, and if you put it in –attach reasons stating YOU put it in.

**Late Notification:**

Often the 'replies' arrive right at the end of December. ie. Sent their last day of business.

**Confidential items.**

There are too many, and Council Members often fail to push them into public view. WA Department of Local Government should have powers to force items into the open, Plus to hide any 'commercial/financially business sensitive figures' for a certain length of time into the future (then one day reveal them.).

**Rushed public consultation.**

Especially when Reports and Documents are hundreds of pages or more. You cannot find the time to properly read, analyse, check these volume of information in three weeks. You need five weeks at least. Plus often a local government will then rush that consultation effort through a public meeting for Final approval soon after. Therefore leaving less time to analyse the finalized report, Activity Centre, etc. Let alone check if they properly included/answered your efforts.

I wrote to The *Western Australian Planning Commission* (State Agency) on it. I had written to the local government, Is it that difficult to include in the Table of Submissions:

I had spent a considerable amount of time on the fix up, it was very clearly written, I saw no issue with the *Officer* saving time and merely putting all my fixes straight in. Very straightforward, very easy. Why did they not at the very least email the *amended Table of Submissions* to me?

I certainly hadn't wasted time on get a weak effort.

The item should also state that submitters were not notified of the listing.

In simple terms, LGAs can/do not inform you as a submitter. Therefore they leave it late for any submitter to fix a flawed table of submissions. When you get the responses I have got, why else would I not want to demand a *State Government Agency* overrule, change, and fix their publicly visible mess (which is already linked to my name/submission). I was polite, I was patient, I was very approachable yet public citizens can get deliberately ignored.

A member of the public can take it as an insult if a LGA warp your submission in their summarization, and misquoted & mis-represented your views.

When was the last time any metro local government was corrected on messing up public submitter efforts by a State Agency or Local Government Minister?

Local Governments are all expected to do proper planning, delivery effort. *State Agencies* expect *local governments* to deliver. Yet are often deceived.

**Delaying and denying access to information:**

Some local governments do this. Publicly available meetings are difficult or impossible to get a read of.

**Genuine, fair advertising.**

The more important the item to the public (especially financial value) use large, prominent, colour advertisements. Do this over several weeks. Do this in regional newspapers as well. Not one ad, one week, rear pages, and nothing else.

Plus place a copy IN EVERY library. On some important public consults you get nothing, yet then unimportant surveys get colours, brochures, posters, and expensive printing, at all libraries. Where is the equity?

**Genuine replies are rare.**

Local governments often drag stuff out and give general lines.

*Local Government* hides away, while *Federal and State Governments* are in full media glare. It won't change, therefore State Officers need take action.

**Public Question Time.**

Why can't the simple act of a public person asking 3 questions be allowed to happen?

***Local Government Staff attitudes tend toward 'Staff Agendas'***. The Staff goals, which can be blind to increasing staff costs to budgets.

**Local Governments use too many external consultants each month on Reports.**

When I disagree with some *consultant's Reports*, they defend the Consultant.

Solution: New Larger metro local governments with better specialist teams to do some of those Reports in-house.

**Publish Public Submissions in Full.**

**Publish online your public Agenda Papers over the last few decades.**

Some local governments do have paper copies in full for a few decades easily available. Nice work to them. Yet other LGAs fail –or should we say hide them away from the public.

Publish online your newsletters across the last few decades.

Many *Council Members* do not realize 'no two suburbs were created equal'. That means suburbs have odd shapes, vast differences in numbers of streets, numbers of population, and of residential blocks of land (ie. Those huge R40 parcel of lands sitting among residential older suburbs.) That factor needs to be taken into account to ensure equity for suburbs that simply have far more citizens within their streets.

I am worried regional subsidiaries are a vehicle for under-performing metro local governments to hide under.

I have seen and heard LGAs say the same things as other did two decades ago. Build more suburbs, increased population, then wealthy local government. Result: spare land all built on, no wealth.

It has been very difficult for other sporting teams to get in front of football & cricket, despite having better economics and playing numbers (teams, genders).

**Thankyou for including this to my March 2018 submission.**

Steve Walker.