

Ken Parker

From: Peter Best [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 12 February 2018 2:03 PM
To: Legislation
Subject: Metropolitan Local Government Review

1. The use of Motions Without Notice should be kept for only a) genuine emergencies, for example a serious risk to life and/ or property, and b) procedural matters.

I see too many decisions being brought up at the end of meetings, under Other Business, without notice. Decisions are then taken without community consultation, discussion with relevant staff or input from relevant experts. These decisions are often poorly worded and are sometimes contrary to decisions which might have been made had there been useful input. The process on the night for such Motions Without Notice is often one of amendments on- the- fly and chaotic process. Hence there are often unforeseen consequences and community anger.

I propose a mandatory two weeks process, as used in City of South Perth, where a motion is developed in consultation with relevant staff, and a yellow paper with the proposed wording circulated prior to the Council Briefing a week before meeting date. This would allow input from the public, from staff and from elected members. The two week period would allow time for the proposer, and perhaps seconder, to discuss the issue with the Mayor and a range of others in order to get the best possible clarity and acceptability.

2. The use of "Point of Order" should be curtailed in Standing Orders. Such points might be raised perhaps a dozen times a year, rather than ten times an hour as often happens now.

Councillors are increasingly using Points of Order as a debating tactic to prevent those with whom they disagree from speaking. As a result we see issues not fully explored and outcomes reflecting limited points of view. Again, this increases community frustration and diminishes the public view of Local Government.

3. Elected Members should be advised of any and all notification of Conflict of Interest received by the CEO and/ or the Mayor.

At present we see staff and other people submitting formal notification of interest, fulfilling their requirements under the Act. These notifications are not always passed on the body of Council, thus diminishing their ability to be fully informed. Input to Council by someone who has advised the CEO of such conflict is the read without knowledge of such conflict.

4. Training of Elected Members should be extensive, useful and compulsory. Training should not be provided by WALGA as that training is likely to be more suitable for paid staff rather than for elected members.
5. Standards Panel should have the power and resources to investigate issues. At present they can only read and request submissions from complainants and Councillors, making their role of limited value.
6. Standards Panel should have the power to insist on training, or to suspend or expel individual elected members where their behaviour significantly diminishes the integrity of their Local Government Authority or inhibits the good functioning of that Authority.

At present the Panel can only suspend the entire Council. There are many situations where one two Councillors seriously transgress the laws and expectations around Local Government but who cannot be disciplined individually.

