

[REDACTED]

From: Anne Christie [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 25 February 2022 3:24 PM
To: DLGSC Act Review
Subject: Submission to Local Government Reform Panel

Dear Local Government Reform Panel,

As a resident of the City of Bayswater, where residents are calling for a no confidence vote at the next Council AGM, I wish to identify areas of the local government reform strategies which are essential to the proper function of a council and which are problematic now. I am also a ratepayer of the Shire of Narrogin.

4.7 Electoral Reform – Clear Lease Requirements for Candidate and Voter Eligibility

Non residents should not be voting in local government elections. Residents are outnumbered by non-resident voters and in CoB, candidates and policy which are favourable for developers and business interests in the city are pushed through. Examples in point: CoB Tree Policy, Change of Peninsula Farm Reserve from passive recreational/historic to commercial.

Residents need to have a one vote one value election without the influence of non-resident developers, business and lessees. In a local government area like ours, experiencing massive levels of infill housing, residents in future will become more and more outnumbered by corporates. This is not acceptable.

I could apply to vote in Narrogin elections as a non-resident, but I do not, as local people are more informed about local candidates and should give known community leaders a chance to be elected. If you don't live in a local government area, it's not possible to be aware of local issues nor about people who are working in the community who would make good local government councillors.

4.4 Public Vote to Elect the Mayor and President

This is essential, but without reform to the non resident voting in council elections, this too would become a sham, as non-resident businesses, developers and lessees would find it even easier to manipulate elections. When councillors are responsible for electing a mayor, the voting is skewed and biased, with councillors acting to improve their own position. Example: City of Bayswater's current mayor only received less than half of the vote for her ward.

Any reform to move to mandatory voting will just increase the business/lessees/developer voting franchise. It has been pointed out that CoB, especially Maylands, having a demographic of low socio-economic disadvantage, may be disadvantaged by this reform. Narrogin residents would certainly be disadvantaged if fines were issued for not voting in a council election.

4.3 Introduction of Preferential Voting

Any reform which removes the problem of totally unknown candidates being supported by current ambitious councillors in local elections is preferred to the current system.

4.7 Electoral Reform – Clear Lease Requirements for Candidate and Voter Eligibility

City of Bayswater have not consulted with residents regarding their submission to this review, and have recommended no change to this element of LG. They do not recommend any change to lease checking. It is essential that if the double vote for corporates, businesses, lessees and developers is retained by this review, then the only way to stamp out sham leases is to check them. I sincerely hope the double vote for the non-resident voters is changed to one- vote -one- value for residents only.

I agree with all of the other proposed reforms, especially those relating to the overseeing of councils in ethics and financial management.

Yours sincerely,
Anne Gaunt