

Christopher May



Whom it may concern

About me:

I am a 32 year old male Councillor at the City of Joondalup. I was elected in October 2017 at age 28 and have recently been re-elected to serve a second term, receiving 56% of the total vote in a three-candidate race.

My professional background consists of employment in small business, and then commercial (large business) banking with two major banks, where I currently work full time. I have previously also worked for two State Members of Parliament and hold a Bachelor of Communications majoring in Journalism, Politics and International Relations.

Views on the proposed reforms:

I will keep this brief – generally I am supportive of the reforms proposed. They will improve Local Government and improve transparency and service provision to the communities Local Government's are responsible for providing crucial services for. In fact, much of what is proposed is already adopted by the City of Joondalup, such as including voting records on each item within the Council Meeting Minutes.

There are two areas in the reforms where I believe there is a need for improvement:

1) Proposal to move to preferential voting

I do not support a move to preferential voting. This will encourage deals, involvement of political parties and result in candidates getting elected based more on what deals they have done with other candidates/parties, rather than raw number of votes.

I believe a more effective item for reform would be to introduce mandatory voting for Local Government Elections, in line with State and Federal Government elections. This would ensure that the often "silent majority" of residents are heard, and candidates are not elected by pandering to more extreme views out of step with the needs and aspirations of the broader community.

2) Recording of Council meetings

I support the audio recording of Council meetings. I do not support video recording of Council meetings, as this would encourage more theatrical behaviour in the chamber by some wanting to turn the Council Chamber into something that is more akin to a quasi Parliament – which is not how Council is intended to operate.

Additionally, the installation of visually recorded Council meetings may encourage props to be brought into the chamber, and generally unruly behaviour leading to a more toxic Council environment.

Video recording technology is also expensive, and given video recording vs. audio recording presents no real benefits, but does present a risk of the above downsides, I do not support it.

Audio streaming works well, and allows those to listen while driving or performing other activities without having to have a video playing as well.

Further, if it is live-streamed, there should be a slight delay to allow for the blacking out of any potentially defamatory comments which could make the Local Government liable should they broadcast such comments, and the matter end up in Court.

The matter of video recording should be left to individual local governments to weigh up. Audio recording should be mandatory at a minimum.

3) Complaints policy

I have noticed since recent changes regarding complaints against elected members from residents or fellow elected members, an increase in the number of frivolous complaints, often during the lead up to election time by prospective candidates, or sitting Councillors intending to run for Mayor. This is particularly evident when there are “factions” on Councils. There needs to be some time spent looking at how to encourage serious complaints, but limit the number of costly, time consuming frivolous complaints being put forward. I do not have the answers to this, but I encourage this to be investigated.

Such individuals, as well as a small handful of habitual so-called activists, create immensely time consuming and costly administrative “churn”, at the expense of serving the community at large.

Summary:

Oppose: Video recording/streaming **Support:** Audio recording/streaming

Oppose: Preferential voting

Support: Compulsory voting retaining a first past the post system or optional preferential voting
(as occurs in Federal Senate elections)

The remainder of proposals I am generally supportive of.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss further.

Regards

Christopher May

