

Local Government Act – Reform Submission

Dear Sir

Thank you for the opportunity for me to raise some issues with regard to the changes to the Local Government Act which I believe needs to be changed to address the many issues of discrimination and bias that exist today in some WA local government councils

There needs to be an Inspector to oversee what both staff and councillors get up to, but they need to be independent of local government and of politics and so need to be appointed by the PSC and not a minister. The Inspector and the panel needs to be accountable and all their decisions published on the website annually of every case

Sharing CEO and staff is a good idea and will help educate the sector. Compulsory live streaming council's meetings will make both staff and councillors more accountable. How all Councillors vote on an item should have their name recorded for transparency. Public question time should be as long as it takes to allow respect to the ratepayers and to enable both staff and councillors to know how ratepayers feel about a subject. All staff and councillors who have a conflict of interest should be recorded in the agenda and minutes

Should not have preferential voting as it's just a tool for political parties and factions to use to get people into council, and that person is not who the majority of the community wants to represent them. Voting should be compulsory to encourage people to get more involved in their local community. Postal vote system needs to change to what happens at state government to stop the issues of misuse ballot papers, which has seen some candidates loose, which is not fair or democratic. Mayor should be elected by the people and the deputy mayor should be elected by councillors, each year

There needs to be a better mechanism to address vexatious and unruly CEO and Mayors, who use their position to advantage and disadvantage councillors and the public. There is nowhere to complain about their behaviours now and we see some councillors and members of the public badly treated and targeted unfairly by Mayors and CEO with no recourse. Education and training is a good idea for everyone, but should be subsidised as it costs a lot of ratepayer's money and councillor time commitment for people, however no point if no one is checking the poor behaviours and poor and selective application of management practice, especially of meeting procedures and protocols

CEO and senior staff should have a time period of employment, of no more than ten years to stop factions building and nepotism opportunities. Ex staff should not be allowed to work for their previous council as a consultant until at least 3 years has lapsed, to stop the conflict of interest, nepotism and disadvantaging other consultants and will allow fresh ideas

Financial statements need to be in accordance with Local Government Administration Regulations 19.B and if they are not, no one checks or makes sure that they do. The format provided to the public in the agendas could be better displayed so we can actually see where our money is going and if these reports are discussed at the audit committee, then they should not be confidential with our money and there should be more validation for the number of staff and their wages which is a lot more than state government employees

Yours Faithfully  
M Price

