

17 December 2015

Local Government Act Advisory Committee

Attention Ms Hanna Wood

Via Minister Hutchins

**Submission to Review of Local Government Act (LGA)**

I should be pleased if you would review the following issues with a view to amending the LGA to ensure:

- Ratepayers have an unrestricted right to ask questions of Councils during designated times of public meetings of councils and without imposing quotas. Some councils don't wish to have exposure to ratepayer criticism and impose quotas and cumbersome procedures to ask questions
- Compulsory live broadcasting of council meetings through live video and audio of proceedings. This would open up the exposure to the workings of councils
- Maintenance of a publicly accessible audio-visual recording of all Council proceedings for three terms of council
- Maintenance of complete and accurate minutes of Council proceedings and the opportunity for ratepayers to suggest their amendment if there are reasonable grounds to suggest they are an inaccurate record of the meeting.
- Recording of the names of each councillor by vote in ALL Council proceedings
- Retention of Council meeting minutes and agenda papers on the council website for a minimum period of three terms
- Provision of open, timely and evidence based public consultation on major issues, including the public work-shopping of significant issues
- Mayors only have one vote on any decision or matter and not an additional 'casting' vote on ANY type of vote or matter
- ALL councils have multi-councillor wards of at least three councillors. Single councillor wards favour wealthy candidates and result in undemocratic and unrepresentative councils
- ALL mayors are popularly elected at election time. Too many mayors are elected behind closed doors and through pre-selected mayoral votes

-Councils cannot publish paid public notices (advertisements) that include names of councillors during the lead up to local government elections (i.e. caretaker period) and any legal notices are confined to genuine ratepayer advice and authorised by the CEO

-Councils cannot outsource the fee setting for services (e.g. leisure centres, libraries, sporting facilities, swimming pools) outsourced to commercial or not for profit organisations. This practice results in organisations, which have no accountability to ratepayers, setting any fees they wish and sometimes engaging in price gouging

-Independent reviews of individual councils every three years against a standard and public template and methodology establish by state government, with publication on the State Government website. There is too much scope for councils to fudge the results of their own reviews.

Please do not hesitate to call me should you wish to discuss these matters further.

Kind regards,

Vaughan Duggan  
2/2 Tambo Court  
Glen Waverley 3150

0437 345 258