

**From:** [Reuben Rose](#)  
**To:** [OLG BS Office of Local Government Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** Model Meeting Code Amendments  
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Dear OLG Council Governance Team

As a newly elected councillor for the Snowy Monaro Regional Council, I welcome the new **Model Code of Meeting Practice amendments** proposed by the Minister and the OLG team.

I agree completely with the Minister's intent to make the whole council process more transparent and accountable to local residents and ratepayers. I have a few observations:

### **1. Code of Conduct Complaints**

I have worked in academia in Australia, the UK and the US, as well as with various public bodies and private companies. I was shocked when I entered the council to find that code of conduct complaints and threats were being thrown about like confetti. I actually proposed that we, as councillors, should just desist from making code of conduct complaints. The proposals in the new Model Code are excellent, and the Minister has correctly identified these complaints as impediments to good governance. I have never seen this process in any other organisation, and I believe such complaints will be drastically reduced when the new code is enacted.

### **2. Pre-councillor briefing removal**

I was amazed to find that these pre-council meeting briefings were being used to ensure that critical information did not make its way into the public space. It is essential that all councillors' deliberations are made available to the public and that the perception (and reality) of deals being done behind closed doors is removed from the public perception.

### **3. Information from closed meetings**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It is logical to ensure that material classed as "confidential" really is confidential and that information is published after it ceases to be confidential.

### **4. Recordings to be published for longer**

I am concerned that many councillors who attend by audiovisual link are not properly able to participate in the council meetings. It is important that the new Code tightens the requirements for attendance and that the recordings be available for longer. It is concerning, though (and should be considered in the new model code) that the GM has the power to edit the recording as he sees fit. This power should be eliminated.

### **5. No final planning decisions without staff recommendations and reasons for planning decisions**

Clearly, there was material before ICAC that indicated that there was the possibility of a lack of integrity in some planning decisions. It is sensible to enact new provisions in the code of conduct that deal with this.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Conclusions

Taken as a whole, the new model code is excellent and a great step forward in ensuring respect and transparency. An important issue that I have observed is the key role of the mayor in council meetings. Compulsory training for mayors to ensure more productive meetings is an important tool so that when there are infringements of the standards of behaviour, they are quickly dealt with. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The quality of the meeting depends on the chair of the meeting, and my experience to date is that the meetings need to be run with much more rigour and discipline.

I commend the Minister and the department and agree with the Minister's comment on page 4 that councillors should make: "*informed decisions in an environment that supports democracy, transparency and where elected representatives are given the respect they deserve.*"

All councillors should be committed to this. The new Model Code of Conduct will significantly enhance meeting processes and transparency.

I suspect there will be significant resistance by some councils who prefer to operate behind closed doors and trust that the OLG and the Minister will not be swayed from their intent to provide excellent reforms.

Yours sincerely  
Reuben Rose

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[REDACTED]