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**To:** [OLG BS Office of Local Government Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** Model Meeting Code Amendments  
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To whom it may concern,

Good morning. I'm someone that has recently taken an interest in local politics after moving to Armidale, so if anything I say comes across as ignorant, I apologise.

Having looked over the model meeting code amendments I think many of the amendments introduced are great steps forward to helping protect the community and keep councils accountable. Here in Armidale it has been a rising concern about lack of transparency from our council, so I'm sure many in our community are eager for these changes.

The biggest point that sticks out, however, is a seemingly random change tacked on at the end about councillors having to stand for the mayor entering and when addressing the chamber. This point feels completely detached from the rest of the amendments and, from what I've seen discussed among peers, comes off as a very tired tradition. Regarding standing for the mayor, while a certain level of respect is desired, rules like this that force it come across as oppressive and does not hold in line with the idea of "first among equals."

The second part, standing to address the chamber, is more generally understandable, but again, feels moot. Here in Armidale the mics are a part of the table and, as far as I can tell as a member of public, don't disconnect or raise to meet standing height. Also, as our council meetings are usually just the key members of council and usually >10 members of public, I imagine having our councillors stand to talk will feel very awkward and forced, however, the current model of a round table-esque discussion helps conversation and ideas flow more naturally, without the added tension.

Mentioned briefly above, the Armidale community is feeling a bit disconcerted with the amount of information our council keeps behind closed doors, so the amendment of them having to disclose information is a welcomed one, however I'm curious how this would be enforced. How or when will the public know if relevant information has been declassified. Do we trust in a higher power to come and do at least semi-regular audits of each council to ensure all their behind-closed-door meetings are up to par with the Model Meeting Code. I understand if this is conducted through audits, but unless they are something that is regularly scheduled, I can't say I have faith in our government or other relevant bodies to conduct these checks regularly or thoroughly, ultimately leading to the potential of a lot of misdemeanours falling through the cracks and local populations being no better off than before.

Aside from the final amendment about standing, as outlined above, I believe a lot of these changes are a step in the right direction (though as someone still rather inexperienced I can't say I understand the GM one, but that's neither here nor there) and I look forward to their implementation for councils in the future to help look after communities such as Armidale.

Best wishes,  
Isaac Gregory.