

From: [REDACTED]
To: [OLG BS Office of Local Government Mailbox](#)
Subject: MODEL MEETING CODE Amendments Office of Local Government's Governance Team
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the amendments under consideration regarding the code of conduct and meeting practices for council/councillors

Will the proposed amendments made in the consultation draft of the Model Meeting Code achieve the policy outcomes identified in this paper?

I don't feel that this policy and any amendments will change anything that is happening in local councils. My thoughts on this are as a result of interaction with the local regional organisation via contact with councillors, attendance to meetings, involvement in community activities. Potential candidates for councillor roles pursue 'their path' by platforms based on accountability, transparency, voice/advocate/consultation for community, and the daily basic needs expected of the community in regard to roads, rubbish etc. When 'oaths' are repeated/taken, the platforms to get to the role are dropped and the focus is on big business, stakeholder and potential business opportunities. It is also evident that the behaviour of the majority of councillors, especially during a public meeting, when a councillor raises an issue of concern of the community. This behaviour and slanging matches, appear to be more personal, are rarely 'bought to order' and, of course their motions are voted down.. The 'Workshops' held prior to the open meetings have already decided the future of agenda items. This has been reconfirmed when local councillors have been approached over various contentious and costly projects, with the response/s.. no point the decision has been made, projects have already been discussed, agreed and to sometime ago. Emails sent to all councillors requesting information or commenting on local concerns, are only acknowledged by 2/3 out of 9... strangely this is very similar to the voting on agenda items in a local meeting... The position of General Manager/CEO is a contractual apolitical position, for the administration of the organisation's services and staff, with all the councillors being responsible for the oversight, review and evaluation of all the activities carried out by the CEO/GM within the delegation of this position. Behaviour of individuals is a can of worms, no rules, acts, regulations, legislation etc is going to change individual personalities or their behaviour. One would expect that when accepting a position within an organisation, a realisation of the duties required to be carried out affect the daily lives of all individuals and all businesses. Providing appropriate training to all, reduces the need for 'behavioural management', including bullying, harassment, vilification, coercion etc, as does leading by example... Wording like 'visibly in control of their councils' does not evaluate to transparency, accountability, communication, to me describes 'box ticking a process'..

Are there any other amendments you would suggest that will achieve these policy outcomes?

Amendments that could help, in my view, is to revisit the 'disclosure by councillors and designated person return' to include family members or relatives employed within council, and any associated businesses, including past councillors or staff. This also would include any level of pecuniary interest.. Any timeframes associated with political donations etc.. Should be deleted, as most local planning is long term, so 'deals' can be agreed to before or after the stipulated timeframe. In my view, this would assist with accountability, transparency issues that are growing concerns with an organisation that relies on public monies at and from various levels.

Will the proposed amendments have any unintended consequences?

Some unintentional consequences could be the result of personal dislike/vendetta against individuals. The repeated slanging matches on the same individuals, that appear personal and are not based on facts, and are supported by the local media, result in a 'complaint' being lodged. To me, this repeated behaviour is part of an agenda that I can only speculate on. It won't be long before this 'complaint' process will be directed at the public for continuing to voice their concerns to individual councillors or the council management, or employees. The 'rumoured' behaviour within the organisation under the management of the CEO/GM, the public display of cruel, vindictive behaviour towards a councillor at the local meetings, could be a display/warning to the community who attend the meeting, that your ability to 'voice' your concerns are very limited. This will also allow 'the chair' to 'empty the gallery' and no longer allow the community to attend or speak at 'open meetings'. This has happened several times and also a 'security guard' has been contracted to 'supervise the attendees' (to protect the staff and councillors, I was told). I am sure that if 'council' is free to determine their own rules for public forums and attendance, with the result of no community attendance, and in the future, no consultation. And who is 'qualified' to decide 'behaviour definitions'?

Are there any other amendments the 'Government' should consider?

Another amendment to consider is the role of the mayor/councillor/chair.. I am concerned that this position has conflicting roles and delegation.. The role of a councillor is at least clear to some degree. The role of the Mayor starts the conflict, especially in the voting process(appears to have 2 votes- votes 1st and I mean 1st before another councillor and then has the deciding vote if needed), delegation, accountability, transparency of administration of organisation, financial reporting knowledge, delegation etc. The Chair is the 3rd conflict, as I have witnessed the lack of knowledge, interpretation, confusion etc in regard to procedural issues in chairing meetings. I think the role of chair should be as 'independent' as possible from the 2 other roles for transparency and should not be seated next to the GM/COE, to ensure that any questions or prompting is heard by all present.

General Feedback

No matter what policies, legislation etc are in place, it will mean more of the same, resulting in more overspending, lack of accountability, transparency, etc , even though we voted for change. The majority of the current 'appointed councillors' in this regional location, appear to be endorsing the continuation of the poor management style, structure and behaviour of the 'council', and in my opinion are making some decisions based on their personal views without undertaking any independent research, and are mostly there for their own personal gain.

Without honest and truly independent advocates who have a proven record of fulfilling their promises to the community, who speak out on the behalf of the community against the 'voting base' the community confidence in the current system will diminish.

