

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [OLG BS Office of Local Government Mailbox](#)  
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Attention - Council Governance Team

I wish to provide the following comments on behalf of the ALP's Eurobodalla Local Government Committee.

#### Councillor Briefings

In November 2024, our committee provided a submission to OLG very strongly supporting the proposal to mandate an entitlement for public access to councillors' pre-meeting briefing sessions. That proposal was contained in the discussion paper circulated by OLG in September 2024 which stated that "councils will no longer be permitted to hold pre-meeting briefing sessions in the absence of the public". Our committee's very strong support continues for a requirement for all councillor briefings to be able to be observed by local community members.

However, we have noted that OLG's current consultation paper (issued in December 2024) seems now to be proposing that all pre-meeting briefings of councillors be discontinued. We are concerned about the possible adverse implications of this revised proposal, both

(i) for the future capacity of councillors and general managers to adequately satisfy the obligations rightly imposed upon them by the Local Government Act in relation to informed decision making, and

(ii) for the very desirable objective of improving the current level of transparency in council decision-making processes in this State.

It would appear that the proposed new framework (as described on page 9 of the December 2024 consultation draft) for the informing of councillors about any matter requiring a specific decision or resolution of the council, would, in future, be restricted to only the channels of (a) the relevant staff reports (contained in the business papers) and (b) the staff responses to any requests lodged by councillors through the 'councillor request system'.

Our committee is strongly of the view that these two proposed channels for the provision of relevant information to the elected councillors should be supplemented, in appropriated cases, with the option of an open and free flowing pre-meeting briefing/discussion between councillors and relevant council staff. We consider that a formal council meeting would quite often not be the ideal forum for this and, of course, would not generally allow adequate time and opportunity for councillors to properly consider and reflect upon any new information gained by them immediately prior to being required to vote on a particular resolution that was before them for decision at that meeting.

The complex and diverse issues, that now regularly confront a community's

elected representatives on councils, clearly require the availability of a fully comprehensive set of options to facilitate properly informed decision-making on behalf of their communities.

Jim Bright  
Secretary  
Eurobodalla Local Government Committee  
Australian Labor Party  
28 February 2025

