



CR PAUL TULLY LLB, JP (Qual)
Ipswich City Council
Councillor for Division 2



By email: egc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Committee Secretary
 Economics and Governance Committee
 Parliament House
 George Street
 Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Committee Members

SUBMISSION RE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DISSOLUTION OF IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL) BILL 2018

Russia, North Korea and even Chairman Mao from Communist China would be salivating over **the Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Bill 2018**.

Compared with the accepted standards and norms of the Western World, this Bill exudes a lack of procedural fairness, a complete disregard of democratic principles and a breathtaking departure from proper transparency and accountability.

Al Capone and the Boston Strangler were afforded greater legal rights than the 10 sitting Councillors of the Ipswich City Council against whom no allegations or accusations have been made.

Having failed spectacularly with two Show Cause Notices - both intended to permit the dismissal of the Ipswich City Council by administrative decree - the Minister has now unilaterally initiated legislation to achieve the same result.

Even **Section 6 of the Bill "Decisions not reviewable"** purports to revoke the ancient right of citizens to have our superior courts test the validity of any legislation.

Never before in Australian history - since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 - has any Australian colonial or state Parliament attempted to dismiss one specific, democratically-elected local government via a special Act of Parliament.

It beggars belief why a Queensland State Labor Government, publicly committed to the ideals and principles of protecting workers' rights and embracing the "fair go" principle for all, would travel down the dark path of oppression involving the autocratic dismissal of residents' local Councillors elected just over 2 years ago.

It is a dangerous precedent which will no doubt haunt lawmakers for many decades to come, while simultaneously putting fear in the minds of all honest mayors and councillors across Queensland's other 76 councils.

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History will record this action as being akin to the worst excesses in Australia of any State or Commonwealth Parliament over the past 2 centuries.

Clearly, the Committee should recommend to the Government that it NOT proceed with the Bill.

I would make 2 other observations:

SECTION 7 – Disqualification of ICC councillor

The proposed **Section 7(2)(a)** specifically allows sitting Ipswich City Councillors to nominate for the 2020 quadrennial election.

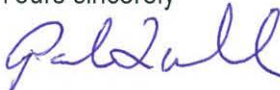
Surprisingly, **Section 7(2)(b)** prohibits a current Ipswich Councillor from nominating for any other local government election until AFTER the 2020 election i.e. 2024. It seems bizarre that a current Ipswich Councillor who moves away from Ipswich and commences living, for example, in Toowoomba, Rockhampton or Mt Isa would be statute-barred from standing in that other local government area in 2020 but could freely contest the 2020 Ipswich election. The Committee should specifically reject **Section 7(2)(b)** as being anathema to every notion of common sense, fairness and democracy. It seems only fair and just that a current Ipswich Councillor should be able to contest any position in any of the 77 Queensland councils, depending upon where they are living in 2020.

COMPENSATION

In almost every other jurisdiction, a worker dismissed without cause is entitled to fair compensation. Current Ipswich Councillors should be entitled to be fairly compensated if the Government proceeds with the Bill. This would genuinely appease many in the community who are shocked and dismayed at the proposed unilateral sacking of their councillors. It would go a significant way to ease the widespread angst which has greeted this proposed legislation.

My suggestion is that all affected Councillors be statutorily provided with either 2 weeks' pay for each continuous completed year of service to local government or be paid out in full until the normal conclusion of their current term of office in March 2020. This would go a long way in portraying the Government as acting fairly and honourably towards each of those sitting Councillors. Anything less would set a particularly unfair and dangerous precedent for the future.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR PAUL TULLY - LLB JP(Qual) MAICD MMIA MMA MMEA FPIA(Hon)
CITY OF IPSWICH

Queensland's Longest-serving Councillor 1979 - 2018

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