

Councillor Wendy Boglary

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21 May 2019

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

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Dear Committee Secretary,

***RE: Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislative Amendment Bill 2019***

I fully support reforms that will further strengthen the transparency, accountability and integrity measures which apply to the system of local government in Queensland as I am also committed to supporting local councils to ensure that public confidence and accountability is demonstrated.

With the intent to have a “fairer playing field” during elections and increase transparency throughout [Local Councils](#) I forward this submission regarding implementing [Stage 2](#) of the Belcarra Reforms.

1. Amendment – S.26 Local Government Electoral Act

I support **Mandatory Training** for those wishing to nominate for a local Government election before nominating. After each election I hear from new councillors that they weren’t aware of exactly what the job included and they are extremely stressed. I would like Councillor responsibilities and the variance of the work to also be included with the governance within the training.

2. Amendment – S127B –Local Government Electoral Allowance

I support having a **dedicated campaign bank account** for election expenses to ensure ease of transparency however **I do not support prohibited use of credit cards** as this could be detrimental to candidates who are independent and self-funded. For those candidates who are self-funded to save for example \$15,000 for a local divisional election every four years is difficult and the use of a debit card for self-funded candidates is definitely needed. I believe not having the use of a credit card as a backup is a disadvantage to self-funded candidates who have those candidates who are party or group aligned, receive donations and have direct access to funds also campaigning for their area.

3. Amendment S545AA and S45AB Local Government Electoral Allowance  
I support the options for councils to **conduct elections by postal ballot**. Due to the variance within Local Council in Queensland I believe in some areas this would be a necessity.
4. Amendment S170 – LGA – Giving direction to Local Government Staff, S258- LGA- Delegation of Mayor’s powers, S107A – LGA- Approval of Budget  
I fully support the changes to the **Mayoral Powers** on both accounts, that the Budget is a whole of council budget and the Mayoral powers to give direction are limited to scope as to what was previously in the LGA before the change in 2012. I want to ensure there is definite clarity that direction would have to be a majority of council direction and not simply just the mayor or a select few.

I strongly support Mayoral directions being in writing to ensure all directions are transparent and gives certainty to accountability. Maintaining of a direction register is also supported.

Recently before the Local Government forum to discuss these changes, direction from the whole of Redland City Council was given to the Mayor for these discussions. The majority of Councillors were in favour of this particular reform as was the previous whole of Council submission.

5. Amendment S125A –LGEA- Expenditure, Return of Political Expenditure by third party  
**Real Time Disclosure** of electoral Spending. I fully support as much transparency as possible in this area. I am seeking clarity as to what the consequences would be if a third party did not disclose expenditure for a candidate or group of candidates and also how can “mates rates” for certain candidates, example with printing costs, be more accountable.
6. Amendment – S65- LGEA (System of Voting)  
**I strongly oppose compulsory Preferential Voting**. My reasoning is for single member Divisional Councillor elections this will lead to stacking candidates. I am a genuine independent Councillor and I do not support having to nominate other candidates on my voting form in a preferential order, as this is the voters’ decision. Party Politics should not be included at this local government level, as opposed to State and Federal, and I believe preferential voting will only lead to candidates that have Political Party and group alliances nominating as running partners to work together to stack the odds against independent candidates . I propose the retention of the existing optional preferential Voting system.

I applaud the State Government for their efforts to increase accountability and transparency in Local Councils and on a whole fully support these amendments. I would appreciate clarity surrounding those points mentioned and appreciate being able to contribute to these changes in the Act.

Yours faithfully,

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