

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [EGC](#)  
**Subject:** Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018  
**Date:** Thursday, 22 March 2018 1:53:53 PM

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To whom it may concern,

Thanks for the opportunity to make my views known on this matter. I trust they will be considered.

1. I believe it is essential that full time ongoing disclosure of all donations must be made to a publicly accessible register - to all politicians and also to all councils. Not only at election time. This must include gifts or services in kind.
- 1b. The only way to ensure no bias at election time is to have election funds pooled into one account and every candidate be awarded an equal amount for campaigning.
2. We urgently need full transparency about all council decisions - especially with time given for public consultation - that is acknowledged and responded to, not ignored as is now so frequently the case.
3. Retrospective legislation affecting residents and ratepayers makes a mockery of our legal system. I was deeply shocked to hear both houses approved the changes to the differential rating system - this legalises council theft of ratepayers money!
4. Where there are conflicts of interest no councillor mayor or CEO should have any vote. Pre-arranged block voting must also be done away with.
5. Council records must be made publicly available to allow scrutiny of their dealings and decisions without redactions. It is frequently the case that when information is sought through Rights to Information many of the relevant details are blocked out.
6. An fully independent complaints team must be set up to field complaints about councils. The current system whereby councils investigate and then absolve themselves of any wrongdoing is a complete farce. The process to take a complaint first to the CEO before it can go to the Ombudsman who anyway has no teeth, wastes time and resources. The councils do not take on board the advice given leaving those with serious issues no natural justice. Also, it is totally unacceptable for the CCC to refer matters taken to them to the CEO's of councils. Some CEO's have already been shown to be implicated in corruption and unethical handling of matters. In the very least, the CEO's defend their staff no matter how unacceptable the situation is. (A tiny example of this is one where an apology was sought over the behaviour on social media of a councillor, and the response from the CEO was to fine the person who brought the complaint even though evidence of it was given! Totally out of line!). The result of this is that many are fearful of speaking up for fear of repercussions.
- 6b. When requested full details of complaints made against residents, which council investigates and acts on, must be given to those complained about - time, date, exact complaint, in order that natural justice can be given to the person defending themselves. Where cleared and dealt with should be noted. Vexatious complainants should also be placed on a register. The anonymous nature of the complaint is not acceptable.
7. There must be full disclosure to the public with maps showing planned developments well ahead of time, and a full public consultation process followed, where objections are

not ignored as they currently are. The current consultation process is a complete farce, with a great many people who are seriously affected extremely unhappy and angry about what is happening. This goes a long way to explaining the public's view about an unacceptable breach of trust in our authorities elected representatives, and public servants. Grey gifts are always difficult to trace, but they happen, and this must be taken into account and fully investigated where suspicions arise.

8. Councillors and Mayors are elected to represent their constituents, and their community, NOT work for the benefit of the council as many are now doing. There is increasing unhappiness across the community about the lack of representation. The amalgamation of some councils - in particular the MBRC - has only worsened this problem.
9. When council staff return calls or call residents these calls are not recorded - yet all incoming calls are. This means when anyone is investigating any matter, what has been said, is left unproven. This is also the case for State Government.
10. There must be a 5 year moratorium on ex government staff taking up lead positions in the commercial sector.
11. Where clear backflips happen around Priority Development Areas, as in the case of [REDACTED] re the Upper Kedron Development and the Toondah World Heritage Ramsar site, where an increase in the size of the development occurs, a full investigation must be implemented and such decisions Must not go ahead.
12. Clear laws must be introduced to safeguard open green space gifted to the public to keep them that way, NOT to allow councils like the Gold Coast City Council has done, to approve development on them instead.
13. A large part of the problem is the complete devolution of responsibility to Local Governments, which in many instances are not competent to manage them. There is no point in having a local government minister who cannot reign in councils who are acting unreasonably, unethically and unfairly. This needs to be rectified. Some residents are in the invidious position of having no representation at all, where their local councillor refuses or is unable to assist them, and is told that the State representative is not allowed to intervene. This situation is entirely unacceptable as it allows councils to act like highly unethical dictatorships with no real effective overview. This toxic culture needs public scrutiny through ICAC.
14. Salaries and travel and other perks to CEO's Mayors and councillors must be reduced and capped. They are currently ridiculously high and just seen as financial sinecures.

Thanks for your attention to the points I have raised.

Denise Ravenscroft.