

Councillor Wendy Boglary

Postal Address:



28<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

**Submission in relation to: Local Government electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016**

Dear Sir,

*“The objectives of the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, as set out in the explanatory notes, are to:*

- 1. improve transparency and accountability in local government electoral disclosure requirements and to remove any confusion”*

Based on the objectives as per the Queensland Government’s Fact Sheet on the above Bill, I wish to submit my support for the Crime and Corruption Commission’s recommendations as per their tabled report ‘Transparency and accountability in Local Government’ December 2015.

In particular, I am referring to recommendation 3, 5 and 6.

- **Crime and Corruption Report recommendation 3 – That the Government consider amendment to disclosure time frames to make the disclosure of donations more contemporaneous with the receipt of the donation by the candidate and others required to make a disclosure.**

At present candidates are required to disclose campaign donations within 15 weeks after election (polling) day. The CCC Report states this would seem to hamper voters’ ability to make an informed decision about a candidate before they vote. The

CCC believes that campaign donations should be declared on an ongoing basis throughout the campaign via online or electronic submissions.

I support this recommendation as it increases accountability to the voters as to who candidates are aligned to either politically or with private donations which sectors of the community eg developers, conservation groups.

- **CCC Report Recommendation 5 – That the Government expand the regulation of donations to include the expenditure of donations and a requirement to account for unspent donations by either using the funds for campaign purposes or transferring them to a registered charity.**

This is a vital change to increase transparency surrounding donations. At present candidates have to keep a separate account for all donations; however, there is no required reportable record of the expenditure of these funds.

The CCC report *states* “that transparency would be greatly increased if, at the end of the relevant *disclosure* period, candidates were required to:

- *Submit a return in relation to the expenditure of the funds, and*
- *Maintain any unspent funds in a dedicated account until the candidate runs for the next election or transfer the funds to a registered charity.”*

I was extremely disappointed to note that the State Government and the Local Government Association did not endorse part of recommendation 5 that requires local government candidates to submit an expenditure return in addition to a donations return.

The reasons given for not supporting this CCC recommendation were that it would cause an administrative burden on the candidates. I question this reasoning as all candidates for their own accounting records would already have a list of their expenses; therefore, *it* is no extra burden on candidates except to submit this record along with the donation record to be published. This inclusion is not administrative burden considering the ease of processes to publish on line.

I therefore fully support this extra layer of integrity and transparency in declaring expenses which also includes the unspent donations at the end of an election donation disclosure period. Without such accountability the second part of recommendation 5, which considers unspent donations, could not be monitored as there is no transparent expense accounting measure.

- **CCC Report Recommendation 6 – That the Government strengthen the obligation upon councillors, chief executive officers and senior executive employees (relevant person) to declare funds, gifts or benefits provided to another entity which could be perceived to provide the relevant person with a benefit.**

I support this increased transparency as councillors, chief executive officers and senior executive employees are all heavily involved in not only the decision making but in giving the facts and advice that such decisions are then based upon. To ensure

any connection where there could be a possible perception of a “family” or “individual” benefit is reported for public scrutiny will relieve this concern.

There are increasingly reports of public perceptions of corruption and or self -interest with all levels of government. To prevent, dispel or uncover such acts those with the honour of representing the community in these **positions** have to **adhere to** the highest level of integrity and willingly be transparent and accountable in all their duties to their communities.

The Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) is the “**watchdog**” to ensure due process is followed with good governance, and representatives are held accountable. To therefore not support their recommendations gives merit to the public’s “*perceptions of corruption and self-interest.*”

Based on the policy objectives and the reasons for them, which is to improve transparency and accountability in local government electoral disclosure requirements and to remove any confusion, I support all recommendations by the CCC and request that the Parliamentary Committee endorse their recommended changes.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Boglary

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.