



Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Logan City, Council Representation

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (2.48 pm): I stand here as an elected representative of over 34,000 Logan City electors. I take this responsibility seriously so it would be remiss of me not to publicly address the issue that is most commonly raised by a large portion of my electorate, and that is the representation or lack thereof from their elected council representatives. Not only is Logan City without its elected mayor; Logan's division 6 in my electorate comprising Edens Landing, Holmview and parts of Waterford are without their elected councillor. Both of these representatives currently sit on the sidelines suspended. The residents of division 6 not only have an acting mayor but also an acting councillor in Councillor Cherie Dalley. This is not to discredit the work of Councillor Dalley, who has her own division to look after as well as taking on the role of acting mayor and endeavouring to represent the residents of division 6. However, she is only human and cannot be all things to all people. The residents of division 6 deserve better. They deserve the same amount of representation as other divisions. Goodness knows they are paying the same amount of rates as ratepayers in other divisions.

In December 2016, just nine months after being elected, division 6 Councillor Stacey McIntosh was charged with stealing, a charge later amended to fraud in relation to allegations surrounding her previous employment. I am not standing here to prejudge Ms McIntosh or to pre-empt the outcome of the court matter. I firmly believe that everyone is entitled to the presumption of innocence and to have their day in court. However, the reality is that it has been 26 months since the initial charges were laid by police. Ms McIntosh has had more than her day in court; she has had several. The matter has been adjourned over 10 times and she still has not entered a plea. This has been drawn and dragged out and the ratepayers of division 6 deserve better.

I cannot go anywhere in division 6 without residents justifiably voicing their concerns about not only the lack of representation but also the fact that they are still paying a councillor who is not representing them. I will say that again: Logan ratepayers are paying the wages of a councillor who is not representing them and for this privilege they receive reduced representation.

Just to demonstrate the outright embarrassing position this leaves the city of Logan in, early on in the saga back in February 2017, it was the Logan city mayor, Luke Smith, himself the former division 6 councillor, who called on Councillor McIntosh to do the right thing by the city of Logan and resign. That is right, the now suspended mayor of Logan, currently himself facing a corruption charge as well as criminal charges relating to private matters, called on Councillor McIntosh to resign for the good of the people of Logan. I wonder how that advice sits with the suspended mayor now that he himself faces numerous charges. I could almost see the amusing side of this if it were not for the embarrassment that these matters cause locals as well as the red hot anger over the fact that we as ratepayers are forking out for this circus.

I know that neighbouring councillors and state members, including the member for Waterford, are doing the best we can to progress council related issues when raised by residents. However, there are some serious issues, particularly with respect to proposed developments in division 6, that require

a consistent and persistent local councillor presence. A crematorium has been planned adjacent to one of our largest retirement villages and numerous commercial development applications have been submitted, including a multistorey hotel, which will impact on the local community. Each of these developments needs to be considered on their merits and the local councillor should be an advocate for their division.

I fear that massive changes will be happening around the residents of division 6 and that their views and feelings cannot be adequately taken into consideration without full-time representation. Ms McIntosh is entitled to her due process throughout the legal system. However, considering the full pay she is on while this saga continues, I am calling on Councillor McIntosh to stop the delaying tactics and allow the DPP to get on with their job. This has gone on long enough, the councillor has delayed long enough and this is an abuse of process. Justice, whichever way it swings, must be done. The residents of division 6 demand it.

I understand that representation has been made to the Minister for Local Government to appoint an administrator to cover division 6. While I welcome any move that would see the division capably represented, I would caution the appointment of anyone who would seek to use the position as a springboard into the upcoming 2020 council elections. After over two years of turmoil, the residents deserve solid, honest representation, not political campaigning by someone preoccupied with winning an election.