



BRRAG

Belmont Resident and Ratepayer Action Group Inc.

“To provide an effective voice for the people of Belmont”

26 July 2020

Mayor and Councillors
City of Belmont

Dear Mayor and Councillors

RE: Item 12.1 OCM 28 July 2020. Disposal of \$334.038.32 of vehicles for \$!

BRRAG member's find it rather disturbing that the Officers have made a recommendation to dispose of the HACC vehicles to the new provider Mercy Care for \$1 According to the report these vehicles have been valued at \$334.038.32

According to the report on page 10 Option 1 it states the following:

“Under this option it is likely MercyCare would withdraw from the provision of transport within the City of Belmont and the ongoing operation and viability of Harman Park Community Centre would also be impacted.”

Discussions at the OCM and voting on the City of Belmont's involvement in the future delivery of HACC services was decided at a meeting closed to the public in June 2019. What on earth was decided at this meeting the public does not know about?

The above statement in option 1 begs the following questions:

- Why was Mercy Care given the contract by the Federal Government if they could not provide the services unless they had vehicles? We will address this with the Federal Government.
- What if any involvement or recommendation was given to the Federal Government by the City of Belmont, to support a service provider that could not provide the same services without the City of Belmont vehicles?
- There has been vehicle/s on order (which we have asked about previously) for HACC for sometime. As this/these vehicle/s were acquired for HACC services via grants, it would be fair to ask if the grant application was submitted with the knowledge that HACC might go to another provider?
- Was there any other service provider that was looked at that already had their own vehicles?

It appears there is a fundamental error in this agreement. No one wants our seniors to be disadvantaged and not have the same level of services. How did the City of Belmont end up in a position where without the vehicles this could occur according to the report? Has anything been put in writing from MercyCare stating they will withdraw without the vehicles? If not why not?

Lets put this donation to MercyCare in perspective for the residents of Belmont. On next years rates which you are voting for on Tuesday, the following is indicated in the report on page 18

- The City of Belmont is quite happy to adopt Section 6.45 of the Local Government Act 1995 by imposing a \$20.00 Administration Fee for all instalment options, excluding registered pensioners / seniors (unless waived in accordance with BEXB7.7 - Financial Hardship Policy (COVID-19)).
- That in accordance with Section 6.45 of the Local Government Act 1995, Council imposes the maximum instalment interest rate allowable. This is currently 5.5% and is applicable to the four instalments option (unless waived in accordance with BEXB7.7 - Financial Hardship Policy (COVID-19)).
- That in accordance with Local Government (COVID-19 Response) Order 2020 penalty interest is applied at the allowable rate of 8% and is applicable to overdue rates (including alternate arrangements unless waived in accordance with BEXB7.7 - Financial Hardship Policy (COVID-19)).

It would seem the City of Belmont may be prepared to give these vehicles away for such an outrageous price, at the expense of our residents. Many of our residents may not necessarily qualify for hardship, but may find it tough to pay their rates all at once. The choice you are giving the residents is pay upfront or you will have all the additional charges outlined on Pg 18 of the report. So this is how the City of Belmont is supporting residents?

We request that this item is deferred for further information. To start with you need something in writing from MercyCare that supports the officers statement of withdrawal of service without them. You also need to look at what other options may be available. Sell for a price that is fair on our residents given you have no issue charging them. Maybe lease them, or give them use providing they meet all expenses. Surely there is something better than this.

Please be advised this letter and your response will go on the BRRAG website for the purpose of transparency for the residents of Belmont. We will ensure this is widely circulated as our residents need to know where our councillors sit on this given there are elections next year.

Lisa Hollands
President BRRAG