



BRRAG

Belmont Resident and Ratepayer Action Group Inc.

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

18 May 2020

Duncan Ord
Director General of Dept of Local Govt & Communities
140 William Street
Perth WA 6000

Dear Mr Ord

Many thanks for your response dated 12 May 2020, regarding Public Question Time at the last Ordinary Council Meeting at the City of Belmont.

I note your comment asking “members of the community to have some patience and understanding in relation to local governments continuing to operate in the current situation.” The current situation is not good for anyone, however there does not seem to be concession on the community who attend council meetings on a regular basis and are excluded even more now there is an opportunity to do so.

Public Question Time is mentioned in the new electronic recordings. As you point out it does not state time frames and therefore up to the local government to make the rules. The City of Belmont, in their Standing Orders covers when they are to receive questions for Public Question Time. It is before the meeting. Ours were in before the meeting as per the Standing Orders. They were not in by the time frame they pulled out of the hat and decided upon to suit this meeting. There was no motion to amend the Standing Orders prior to the meeting or subsequently. Therefore they have acted outside their own Local Laws.

I was of the understanding when this emergency legislation was made and given it made a specific mention of Public Question Time, the purpose was to have the public included as it is a requirement in the Act for questions. Although I may have missed it, I was unable to find anything that suggested this would be a time where local governments could have a free hit at doing as they please without any public scrutiny.

It would seem to me that whilst local governments can make Local Laws such as Standing Orders but they can flout them as they please when and where they want to. Could you please respond to the following:

What is the purpose of local governments making rules, getting them gazetted when they don't have to follow them?

Why is there no provision in the Act for those that breach them?

Please be advised this letter and your response will go on the BRRAG website for the purpose of

transparency for the residents of Belmont as will the response. This letter will be widely circulated.

Lisa Hollands
President BRRAG