



BRRAG

Belmont Resident and Ratepayer Action Group Inc.

"To provide an effective voice for the people of Belmont"

25 July 2019

Mayor Marks and Councillors
City of Belmont

Dear Mayor Marks and Councillors

As you are all aware our organisation and other residents of Belmont have been paying for copies of the recordings of council meetings under Freedom of Information. The cost of this is \$30 per time.

On the 4th May we wrote to Mayor Marks asking for permission to record public question time ourselves. Our letter stated the following:

We would be happy to have supervision of council when switching the recording on and off after this item is finished. They will not be used on our website.

Section 6.11 of the Standing Orders reads as follows: Recording of proceedings (1) A person must not use any electronic, visual or audio recording device or instrument to record the proceedings of the Council without the permission of the Presiding Member or by a decision of the Council.

This request was declined by Mayor Marks as follows: "I do not believe that this request, which is fundamentally based on a distrust of the City's processes, satisfies the requirement to establish an (extraordinary need).

A reply to the Mayor dated 22 May 2019 advised the word extraordinary does not appear in the standing orders. A response has not been received.

Therefore, on the basis we are paying for the FIO copies of the recordings of Public Question Time, we have decided we will be making copies of these available on our website. We will seek the permission of any person from the gallery who asked questions prior to. If there was an objection as some point, I am sure we can work a way around that. It is clear that those that attend monthly to ask questions are keen to have this available.

In the event any person from the City of Belmont, including staff and councillors that has any objection to this will need to let us know within seven days. After that time they will be put up on the website on the assumption there are no objections.

As you know there is an election coming up in October. As least four of the existing councillors may stand for re-election. It would be incorrect information to campaign on transparency when clearly for whatever reason it appears that you do not want people who may have difficulties attending meetings to know what is going on. Other councils are very transparent either live

streaming or making recordings available on their websites. Unless I am ill informed the public does not give consent on a per meeting basis for the councils to be able to do 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. I am sure every resident in Belmont would be very interested to hear of any objections. I am sure we can ensure your response is well circulated to as many people as possible.

Kindest regards

Lisa Hollands
Chairperson BRRAG

cc Minister Templeman