



BRRAG

Belmont Resident and Ratepayer Action Group Inc.

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

4 May 2020

Mayor and Councillors
City of Belmont

Dear Mayor and Councillors

We have not received a response to our letter dated 21 April 2020, regarding the live streaming of council meetings, whilst the public is unable to attend due to COVID 19.

I was notified by Mr Garrett the day after the Ordinary Council Meeting that the BRRAG questions would be taken as correspondence. The reason given was because they were received after the Friday deadline. Mr Garrett has not bothered to respond to the return email (enclosed)

It would appear that whoever made the decision not to take the questions under Public Question Time may have been unfamiliar with the legislation and regulations which I have taken the liberty of familiarising myself with.

The City of Belmont Standing Orders which form part of the Local Government Act S3.8 read as follows:

6.2 Other procedures for question time for the public

- (1) A member of the public who wishes to ask a question during question time is to –
 - (f) where possible provide a written copy of the question prior to question time.
- (4) A member of the public may give written prior notice to the CEO of the text or substance of the question that he or she wishes to ask at a meeting.
- (6) Where a member of the public gives written notice of a question, the Presiding Member may determine that the question is to be responded to as normal business correspondence.

The City of Belmont Standing Orders do not say questions have to be submitted by noon on the business day prior to the meeting. Furthermore the decision to have the questions answered as normal business correspondence it would seem came from you Mr Mayor (6.2) (6) above. One has to wonder why you would do this? Perhaps the content - asking questions about the CEO and staffing with the shutdown of many services, as well as questions relating to HACC vehicles on order, when we will not be delivering HACC after 30 June, Perhaps you did not like the questions and they did not meet your approval?

I have taken the liberty of checking the local government regulations with respect to the time frame of receiving questions for Public Question Time.

14E Modification of Act if meeting held by electronic means (Act s. 5.25(2))

- (4) If a council or a committee holds an electronic meeting, section 5.24 is modified so that the council or committee allocates time for raising questions by members of the public, and the asking

of and responding to those questions, if

(a) the council or committee provides a means to submit a question prior to the meeting;

The time frame that was decided of noon one business day prior to the meeting is inconsistent with the City of Belmont Standing Orders which at no point state this. The reference as outlined above is prior to a meeting. Given these Standing Orders form part of the Local Government Act S3.8, I would not think it appropriate to make rules without checking the legislative requirements. It would appear we will have to follow this up outside the City.

Given the importance of the questions we asked, which may have alerted the councillors to something they had not considered, prior to any voting, this has raised more questions with us as to why you are not being transparent. What is there to hide? Firstly you won't allow live streaming when the public are unable to attend, now you don't want other councillors seeing our questions or having any record of them in the minutes. Now that's TRANSPARENCY isn't it Mr Mayor and you're are the one leading our City!!!!

If this nonsense continues and rules are not followed we will just work around it. The public has a right to know who is and isn't representing them. Perhaps they will remember it when October 2021 comes around.

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