



BRRAG

Belmont Resident and Ratepayer Action Group Inc.

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

21 October 2019

Minister Templeman
Minister of Local Government, Heritage, Culture and the Arts

Dear Minister Templeman

We would like to make a formal complaint regarding the City of Belmont local council elections. There was a lot of incidents that occurred that were simply unacceptable and taint the election process.

One of the more serious concerns which is now ongoing is the “friendship” of CEO, John Christie and that of the Mayor Phil Marks. Mr Christie openly supported the Mayor on social media and this totally affects his impartiality. One has to ask just how many councillors he was or is friends with on facebook. In the event it is not ALL councillors, it certainly suggests he has allegiance to some and not others.

At the City of Belmont some residents have been noting that consistently there is a five to four vote. This includes the Mayor and his supporters, one of which is Cr Bernie Ryan. Clearly Mr Christie is a “friend” of Cr Ryan or he would not have seen the post in the first place to be liking it. It is simply not acceptable to say it was a mistake. How much of a mistake is it to be a friend of someone? The mistake was simply getting caught out on it.

As someone who has attended council meetings for almost three years without missing one, I have had concerns for some time about the relationship between the Mayor and the CEO. One example that has been highlighted for us is that there are several councillors who are on the Committee and are responsible for doing a report to the council on the performance of the CEO in his contractual capacity. The Mayor is one of the people responsible for this and so are others from the five vote.

Back in April this year we asked for a copy of the CEO contract which at the time available under legislation. This was refused to us by the CEO. The councillors were all made aware of the situation. We went to the Director of Local Government who advised we were entitled to it and still we had no satisfaction. It has recently been the subject of a carried motion at an Electors Meeting. No doubt due to this “friendship” and the numbers which have remained the same, this will result in the motion being voted down at council at the next OCM.

As a result of the “friendship” that has now become public, we believe that the CEO is not impartial when it comes to decisions that he is required to make. We also wrote to the CEO on the 6th October asking for an explanation on the removal of the election posters of one candidate from the East Ward. This remains unanswered. With every future decision there will be a cloud of doubt on his impartiality which was previously suspected but now very public.

We request that you take some action with respect to the CEO John Christie and his involvement

with the Mayor. In the community there is already a distrust of local government and CEO's and incidents like this can only support the public perception.

As far as the removal of Mr Glading's posters in the East Ward, one would have to now question the motive behind that as well. The normal process for illegal signs would be the rangers contact you and advise they need to be removed within 24 hrs. Not only did this not occur, but Mr Glading only found out who took his posters via CCTV footage. Would things have been different and operated in the usual way had it not been for the Mayor running against Mr Glading in the East Ward?

Please be advised that our letter and any response provided from you will be put on our website for the residents of Belmont.

Kindest regards

Lisa Hollands
Chairperson BRRAG