

Model Local Government Policy #5

Environment

Should ‘environment’ mean: community and human society, indigenous and exotic flora / fauna, human impact on natures landscape or the political regimen under which local government employment is protected? Simply asking this question highlights the complexity and lack of competent, considerate planning or management is applied to defining ‘Environment’ in both State and local government contexts. For the purposes of Model Local Government Policy, I attempt to address this need to respect integration of multiple environment aspects while focusing on achievement of sustainable society benefit.

Environmental Management Laws Designed to Divide

Changes to the WA Local Government Act. since 1995 are gathering pace in their confirming a definition as a State Government tool for creating an environment of enforced exploitation of our resident and ratepayer’s environment.

With over 3,000 public submissions and a part-time panel of vested interests, the Government’s recent review process itself was demonstration of the depths the Government was willing to go, to exploit or exclude Community respect from Local Government Act. reforms. Sadly, it is also offensive to community values that the review process occurred under the ‘leadership’ of one disgraced into resigning by the current Royal Commission.

Model Local Government policy may be the only remaining avenue for Councils to protect and enhance the Community environments they represent.

If the City of Melville is a reflection of management standards across other local governments, then it is likely that good local government management practice could be under threat of extinction, if it ever really existed in the first place.

City of Melville operates under more than 110 half-hearted policies so confused their application measurably impedes accountable environmental management practice. Written by staff and rubber stamped by Council they were without sufficient information to enable the making of the informed decision required. Such practice is by design as confused or contradictory policy ensures increased, otherwise unnecessary, employment. And as we have heard before; increased employment equates to increased executive salary which in turn dictates increased rates levied on ratepayers. The upshot is that local government laws deliver an environment ripe for legitimising corruption.

‘Divide and conquer’ is a covert practice enduring across British based law since the days of Julius Cesar. Purposeful adoption in legislation creates an environment disrupting unity in public opposition. Political control instead takes precedence over best practice societal values. The above examples show that WA’s Local Government Act is no exception.

Environment Undefined

How can local government have competent policy when so much related to environment remains undefined? Although much talked about; even “conservation” is a term without clear definition and which lack continues to profit careless property developers ahead of the health, safety and welfare of residents.

The incompetence of environmental protection by WA’s local government urban planners is highlighted when compared to London. 18m people live in 1600 sq km of metropolitan London while Perth has 2m in 6500 sq km. This equates to Perth having about 310 persons per sq km and London more than 11,000 per sq km.

Is the best we can do for mental health, the painting blue of a few dead trees or giving treatments of virtual reality nature? All the while paving our vast urban space in concrete and bitumen? Model Local Government Policy delivers the means to protect Community engagement with their environment.

On a second front, with only 8% of wetlands remaining in WA should we be talking up the endangerment of extinction of wetlands in WA before losing their vital biodiversity altogether? How often have you driven past a park with sparse half dead, alien grass leading down to a dry sump? Seen a smattering of obligatory tall alien trees and perhaps a deserted kiddies play set? All in silence devoid of chatter from indigenous birdlife. Is this the best you should be expecting from local government employees? If you are lucky to see an area of natural vegetation you can be assured it exists only because of local community intervention.

For those who look, the WA human environment is defined by its highly prejudiced class society, intensely driven by political arrogance and micro-controlling ‘planning’ and enforcement agents. Local government is one of those unnecessarily micro-controlling State government instruments.

Model local government policy, attempts to address interconnectedness across:

- Natural fauna and flora environment
- Wetland protection
- Horticultural induction
- Urban infrastructure and built habitat
- Waste management
- Climate change and Carbon footprint
- Sustainability and sensitivity
- Weather & fire emergency
- Airborne pollutants
- Livestock, Pets, Feral Animals, Pathogens Weeds and Pests

Model Local Government Policy assists in remediating incompetence risk in management.

Although there are visible signs of a more intelligent Council led by Mayor Gear, the City still excels itself in demonstrating preservation of a bullying environment of management incompetence.

Environmental Impact Not Addressed

In example of poor vegetated environmental management; there are places where three or more parcels of land, side-by-side, are each subjected to a different management policy and each managed in isolation by different City departments. Inevitably the result is cross contamination and substandard outcomes propping up higher than needed employment costs.

How many times have you seen walls, footpaths and roads damaged by inappropriate tree planting? Have you ever asked why your local government managers do not list in priority-value the type of tree or vegetation they plant or preserve?

Model local government policy requires management enhancement through prioritising guided by:

- Compatibility with location, soil & adjoining plants
- Aesthetic appeal
- Indigenous fauna habitat capacity
- Safety or nuisance value
- Root system infrastructure damage or storm falls
- Maintenance cost and lifespan
- Drought tolerance
- Nutrient, contaminant and carbon stripping value

Local government elections are upon us. Go ask your candidates if they support comprehensive community respectful model policy or would continue with old fashioned costly executive powers policy?



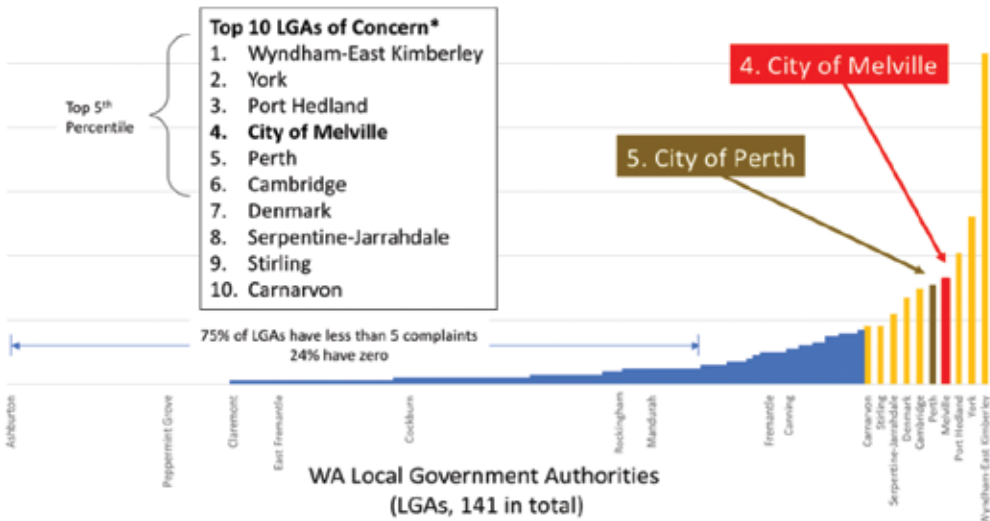
This image shows plastic waste impregnated around the roots of a fallen tree in Bull Creek.

Poor policy of the City of Melville protects this plastic and other toxic waste. This wetland also harbours these exotic trees, towering above high-tension powerlines. Who will carry the cost of such failed management when another one falls and brings down a powerline?

Model Local Government policy is a tool for Councils to counter risk from management incompetence and deliver sustainable Community benefit.

City of Melville in top 5 worst LGAs in WA*

(based on number of entries into Dept. Local Government investigations database 1 Jan '14 to 26 Feb'18)



*Refer WA Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 2473 Tabled 15 March 2018
Prepared by the Department of Local Government , complaints screened and not duplicated

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