Melville Governance Library:

A Structural & Systemic Analysis

Introduction

The Melville Governance Library is a permanent, living repository of evidence established to document, analyse, and challenge systemic failures within the administration and elected Council of the City of Melville.

In Western Australia, local governments are administrative creations of the State, bound by the *Local Government Act 1995* (WA) to provide for the "good government of persons in their district". When a local authority fails to maintain integrated policies, transparent corporate hierarchies, compliant audit oversight, or fair disputation frameworks, it erodes the democratic rights of its ratepayers.

Crucially, local governments do not fail in a vacuum. A breakdown in municipal governance is invariably linked to a breakdown in the broader regulatory framework designed to police it. Therefore, this project applies a continuous, parallel assessment to three core institutions:

- **Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA):** Evaluated on whether its model policies, training, and sector advocacy deliver tangible structural benefits and integrity improvements to the local government system.
- **Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC):** Evaluated on its statutory duty to monitor, guide, and proactively regulate compliance across the sector.
- **Local Government Inspectorate:** Evaluated on its efficacy, speed, and willingness to investigate serious breaches and enforce accountability.

Crucially, the regulatory activity and oversight frameworks of these three State-level institutions operate in direct contradiction to the core statutory intent of the *Local Government Act 1995* (WA). While the Act explicitly mandates community participation and accountability as foundational pillars of local government, WALGA, the DLGSC, and the Inspectorate consistently fail to embed meaningful community engagement into their own regulatory functions, policy development, and intervention triggers. By treating systemic municipal failures as closed-loop administrative or operational matters, these agencies effectively exclude the public from the regulatory process, directly enabling the insularity and democratic erosion observed at the municipal level.

Rather than focusing on transient political grievances, this library isolates long-term, structural deficiencies. By translating local operational failures into State-level systemic realities, it serves as an unassailable evidence base for formal ministerial submissions, parliamentary petitions, and community-led statutory actions.

Evidentiary Boundary & Scope

To ensure absolute legal safety, objectivity, and transparency, this library project is strictly reliant on, and restricted to, information available in the public domain.

This repository contains no leaked, confidential, or restricted municipal files. Instead, it utilizes the City's own published policies, agendas, minutes, and—crucially—the numerous independent external reviews commissioned by the City or State authorities over the last decade. By showing that a comprehensive case for "no confidence" can be built entirely from existing public records, this library demonstrates that the evidence of systemic failure is already fully visible to anyone auditing the system.

Methodology & Architecture

Each item in this repository was processed through a strict, Five-Tier Analytical Architecture to separate observable administrative actions from their statutory implications and regulatory failures:

x.1: **Core Grievance:** A precise, legally grounded definition of the administrative or governance failure, clarifying the exact mechanism of non-compliance or systemic operational deficiency.

x.2: **Statutory & Regulatory Triggers:** A direct mapping of the grievance against the laws of Western Australia. This includes the *Local Government Act 1995* (WA), the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WA), associated financial regulations, Public Sector Commission standards, and the City's own local laws and internal policies.

x.3: **Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data):** Grounding each claim in empirical, verified, and publicly accessible data. This tier integrates findings from independent, authoritative reports conducted on the City of Melville over the past decade.

x.4: **Governance Impact:** An assessment of how the specific failure compromises internal operational oversight, administrative cost-efficiency, transparency, and the corporate management of human and financial resources.

x.5: **Impact on Community, the State System, and Regulatory Integrity:** Evaluates Community Impact, Sector & State Systemic Impact, and an Institutional Performance Assessment of WALGA and the DLGSC / Inspectorate.

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of City of Melville

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Library Entry 1:

Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee (ARIC) Failure & Closed-Loop Conflicts of Interest

1.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville's internal oversight architecture is structurally compromised across two distinct, standalone failures:

Closed Recruitment Loop: The local government operates within a self-referential human resource cycle. The exact same pool of candidates utilized for external independent oversight roles frequently overlaps with individuals embedded within internal municipal management and operational recruitment networks. This ensures that "independent" validation is structurally compromised by professional proximity.

Statutory Deficiencies in Committee Composition and Secrecy: The City's Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee (ARIC) is structurally constituted with a permanent majority of Elected Members (Councillors), forcing them to audit and review the legality, prudence, and operational execution of their own voting decisions. Furthermore, the committee's framework operates with executive management shaping the audit parameters, and the meetings are actively closed to Public Question Time, blocking direct ratepayer scrutiny of structural risk management.

Vulnerability of Independent Leadership Continuity: Because the non-executive structure relies entirely on a single independent Presiding Member and a single independent Deputy Presiding Member to maintain statutory compliance, the individual or joint absence of either officer results in an immediate structural non-compliance event. Because all ordinary constituent seats are occupied exclusively by elected councillors, any single leadership vacancy strips the committee of its required neutral line of succession, creating a state of statutory gridlock where the committee cannot lawfully transact business under a councillor-elected acting chair.

1.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Part 7: Regulates the establishment and operations of local government audit oversight, mandating strict frameworks for independent accountability.

Local Government Amendment Act 2024 (WA) – Sections 86 to 90: Mandates the transition from standard audit committees to "Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committees" (ARICs) by mid-2026, explicitly widening the committee's statutory scope to include risk management, operational continuity, and continuous systemic performance improvement.

Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996 – Regulation 16: Prescribes the rigid functions of an audit committee, requiring a comprehensive review of the CEO's systems and procedures regarding internal control, risk management, and legislative compliance.

Public Sector Commission (PSC) Conflict of Interest Guidelines: Requires that public bodies enforce rigorous separation between individuals providing independent verification and the networks responsible for internal governance recruitment to prevent systemic capture.

1.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

City of Melville ARIC Terms of Reference: As updated and formally endorsed via the City of Melville Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes, the council adopted its refreshed Terms of Reference – Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee. While the framework dictates that statutory external members must have "no association with the City of Melville either as an Elected Member, an officer or a closely associated person," the actual operational selection process has drawn from a closed pool of local government industry insider contractors, creating structural vulnerabilities.

AICD Governance Review (2019): Initiated under the State-monitored City of Melville Inquiry Recommendations Response, this review explicitly warned against information asymmetry—where executive management controls the flow of internal risk profiles, preventing the oversight committee from independently identifying corporate vulnerabilities.

Absence of Public Risk Matrices: A review of the City's public portals shows that while high-level strategic summaries exist, a functional, interactive risk assessment and management matrix outlining shared community responsibilities is not published for ratepayer evaluation.

2026 ARIC Meeting Attendance Records & Succession Analysis: An audit of the 2026 committee attendance rosters confirms a total absence of independent deputy redundancy during scheduled sessions. When cross-referenced against the City's committee index, the records reveal that because every single ordinary position outside of the dual independent leadership tier is occupied by a sitting Councillor, any individual absence of the independent Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member removes the mandatory independent oversight mechanism required to lawfully conduct a meeting under Regulation 19.

1.4: Governance Impact

When an oversight body suffers from a closed-loop candidate pool, the entire framework of independent assurance breaks down. The ARIC transitions from a critical auditor into a defensive mechanism for the executive administration. If the internal systems being reviewed—such as procurement, credit card use, or planning approvals—contain systemic faults, a compromised committee is highly unlikely to challenge the executive status quo. This lack of genuine, external friction prevents the elected Council from receiving unmanaged, raw data regarding organizational failures, forcing Councillors to sign off on compliance reviews without independent verification.

1.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Local citizens lose their primary avenue for systemic escalation. Because the administration does not provide an open registry to report or trace macro-level organizational hazards, ratepayers are completely blocked from holding the city accountable for high-level financial or operational vulnerabilities. Their concerns are filtered out by the very administration being audited.

The Sector & State Systemic Impact: This structural loop directly undermines the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) Local Government Integrity Audits. The OAG relies on local audit committees to act as honest internal gatekeepers. When a metropolitan council operates a closed-loop committee, it creates a false sense of compliance that masks systemic operational degradation from State authorities.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has routinely failed to build a completely independent, State-wide registry of un-associated audit experts to break up localized recycling of committee members. By aggregating a centralized pool that remains a closed circuit of local government industry insider consultants, WALGA's Pool of Independent Presiding Members fundamentally protects professional proximity over true independent scrutiny. This failure directly violates the community participation mandates of Section 1.3(2) of the Act, as WALGA's frameworks actively formalise a closed network that leaves ratepayers structurally locked out of evaluating municipal risk.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: While the State regulator has formalized the new ARIC regulations under the *Local Government Amendment Act 2024*, it has taken a passive approach toward policing the functional reality of member independence. By failing to mandate strict, centralized anti-recruitment loops or enforce rules that ensure public audit transparency, the DLGSC allows local governments to meet the superficial criteria of compliance while maintaining entrenched conflicts of interest. The regulator checks only that an audit committee exists on paper, completely failing to cross-reference the ARIC's review data with internal control registers, systems procedures, or the actual mechanisms through which executive delegations are scrutinized. By passively permitting this closed-loop oversight and the locking out of Public Question Time from risk committees, the DLGSC abdicates its statutory duty to enforce the true intent of the Act, reducing public integrity to a box-ticking exercise that strips the community of its legislated right to direct democratic oversight.

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Library Entry 2:

Systemic Failure to Document and Publish Section 5.41(2)(c) Management Systems and Procedures

2.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville CEO and operational administration refuse or fail to produce, document, or publish to the public the mandatory procedures and systems required under Section 5.41(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1995 (WA). This structural omission leaves the community and the elected Council without any transparent mechanism to verify how the administration ensures uniformity and integrity in its day-to-day operations. Specifically, there are no verifiable, open-access internal control frameworks showing how these underlying administrative systems are applied to safeguard the core statutory functions of the CEO under subsections (a), (b), and (e) of Section 5.41. This complete absence of published operational controls ensures that the administration's execution of its duties remains opaque, un-auditable, and entirely insulated from public scrutiny. Crucially, without these formalized systems and procedures, the executive and other municipal employees themselves have no identifiable framework to ensure uniformity or integrity in either their own strategic administrative guidance, or in the strategic administrative guidance they provide to the local government.

2.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 5.41(2)(c): Explicitly mandates that the Chief Executive Officer must cause to be produced and maintained systems and procedures to manage the day-to-day operations of the local government in a manner that ensures uniformity and integrity.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 5.41(a), (b) & (e): Establishes the core, non-delegable duties of the CEO to advise the council, provide unfiltered information for informed decision-making, and ensure that council decisions are executed appropriately and uniformly.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 1.3(2)(b) & (c): Outlines the overarching legislative intent to achieve greater community participation and greater accountability of local governments to their communities. Keeping operational management procedures hidden directly defeats this mandate.

Public Sector Commission (PSC) Integrity & Openness Standards: Requires public authorities to operate with maximum transparency, establishing clear, documented administrative pathways that prevent arbitrary decision-making and ensure administrative fairness.

2.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

Absence of a Public Administrative Systems Register: A direct and exhaustive audit of the City of Melville's official public registries, corporate reporting portals, and policy frameworks confirms that no formal index, manual, or systemic documentation regarding Section 5.41(2)(c) uniformity and integrity procedures has ever been published for public or ratepayer evaluation.

AICD Governance Review & Historical Inquiry Gaps: Independent governance assessments over the past decade have repeatedly flagged information asymmetry and structural silos between the strategic desires of the Council and the operational execution of the administration. By failing to document and publish the exact systems driving these internal processes, the administration has left these recognized information gaps entirely unmitigated.

Ordinary Council Meeting Agendas & Minutes Analysis: Review of council records reveals a persistent pattern where administrative options papers and executive recommendations are presented to Elected Members as singular, pre-determined paths. The absence of documented systems under Section 5.41(2)(c) ensures that the mechanisms used to curate, filter, and control these critical information streams remain completely hidden from the public record.

2.4: Governance Impact

Operating without documented and published operational systems reduces internal governance to an arbitrary, ad-hoc exercise controlled exclusively by the executive. In the absence of clear operational templates, individual employees are left without objective benchmarks, meaning that the strategic administrative guidance delivered across different directorates possesses no verifiable uniformity or structural integrity. For the Elected Members (Councillors), this structural opacity makes it impossible to fulfill their statutory duty to oversee the local government's finances and affairs. Without visibility into the underlying systems, the Council is forced to evaluate administrative performance in total isolation from objective operational metrics. This lack of internal structural friction encourages a closed corporate environment where duplicative processes, information hoarding, and systemic operational errors are shielded from both political and financial accountability.

2.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Ratepayers are denied their fundamental civic right to an open, accountable, and predictable local government. When a resident challenges a planning anomaly, a financial expenditure, or an environmental delay, they are met with a faceless bureaucracy whose internal rules change arbitrarily depending on the parties involved. This systemic opacity eliminates natural justice, destroys public confidence, and strips the community of its right to verify that the administration is acting with absolute integrity.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This failure exposes a severe, unpoliced vulnerability within the Western Australian local government sector, where an administration can claim superficial compliance with the Act while actively withholding the operational machinery that guarantees it. It directly subverts the State-wide Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework by breaking the required regulatory chain between community oversight, council governance, and executive execution.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has completely failed to provide member councils with standard, open-source templates or mandatory guidelines for publishing Section 5.41(2)(c) systems. By treating day-to-day operations as the exclusive, private domain of the CEO, WALGA's models actively support historical practices of administrative opacity, ensuring the public remains structurally locked out.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: The State regulator has confined its compliance audits to a superficial, box-ticking verification of a council's formal Policy Manual and statutory Register of Delegations, entirely ignoring whether the underlying Internal Procedure Manuals, Operational Registers, and Section 5.41(2)(c) systems actually exist, are integrated, or are accessible to the public. By treating these foundational transparency failures as minor "internal operational choices," the DLGSC abdicates its statutory duty to monitor and guide the sector. This protective passivity reflects an insular industry culture where recycled professional networks across municipal and State oversight bodies instinctively shield executive authority from public accountability, directly denying ratepayers their legislated right to democratic oversight.

[1, 2, 3]

Library Entry 3:

Structural Management Failures & Non-Compliance with Section 5.41 (CEO Functions)

3.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville operational administration fails to maintain or publish a transparent, detailed corporate hierarchical chart of management and staffing structures. This deliberate lack of public organizational clarity ensures there is no objective mechanism for the community or elected Council to evaluate the adequacy, efficiency, or distribution of employee numbers and positions, or their functional relationship to Council or the community they serve. Furthermore, the City operates without a transparent system of functional performance metrics, resulting in internal divisions and directorates working in operational isolation (silos) without organizational unity of outcome

3.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 5.41(g): Explicitly mandates that the CEO's function is to "manage the day-to-day operations of the local government". A failure to document, standardize, and openly map these administrative systems and operational procedures constitutes a structural failure to demonstrate compliance with this statutory duty.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 5.2: Requires that a local government ensure that there is an adequate structure for the administration of the local government. Without public structure metrics or operational transparency, this adequacy cannot be legally verified by ratepayers.

Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA) Principles: While local governments maintain independent human resource hiring capability, they are expected to mirror structural efficiency, transparency, and merit-based organizational clarity aligned with broader State public sector governance standards.

3.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

AICD Governance Review (2019): Initiated via the mandated City of Melville Response to Inquiry Recommendations. This independent survey highlighted significant structural gaps in organizational oversight, specifically focusing on the friction, systemic communication silos, and lack of clear boundaries between the strategic direction expected by Council and the operational execution handled by the administration.

Garry Hunt Organisational Review (2021) & GFG Consulting Directorate Review (2022): These successive reviews, explicitly referenced within the official City of Melville Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes, exposed deeply entrenched operational silos within the Melville administration. "Stage 1" conducted by Garry Hunt Consulting exposed an immediate need for systemic transformation, which led to the appointment of GFG Consulting to review and overhaul structural capacity deficiencies within the Planning and Building Directorate.

Absence of Public Registries: A direct audit of the City's corporate output confirms that while vague high-level director descriptions exist, a granular, functional corporate hierarchy mapping full-time equivalent (FTE) human resource distribution against specific service outcomes is actively withheld from the public domain.

3.4: Governance Impact

Operating without an integrated, public corporate schema prevents any real assessment of administrative "value for money". When internal divisions work in isolation, it breeds duplication of resources, conflicting departmental objectives, and a toxic sub-culture of information-hoarding. For the Elected Members (Councillors), this structural opacity makes it impossible to exercise their budget-setting and oversight duties properly. They are forced to vote on millions of dollars in employee costs without knowing whether staff numbers are optimized, bloated, or misallocated.

3.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Ratepayers bear the financial burden of an unquantified administrative apparatus. When a resident seeks accountability for delayed services (such as planning approvals or infrastructure maintenance), they are met with a faceless bureaucracy where responsibilities are shifted between siloed departments, completely blocking civic transparency.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This case study highlights a major vulnerability in the WA local government sector: the exploitation of operational "independence" to shield administrative structures from public performance tracking. It directly undermines the State Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework by severing the statutory link between community aspirations and administrative capability.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has consistently failed to champion or mandate standardized, open-access corporate structure templates or human resource efficiency metrics for its member councils. By treating internal staffing structures purely as private operational business for CEOs, WALGA's model guidelines protect executive opacity over public sector accountability. This failure directly contradicts the community participation mandates of Section 1.3(2) of the Act by ensuring the public remains structurally locked out of evaluating municipal efficiency.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: The State regulator has historically taken a hands-off approach to Section 5.41 compliance, viewing organizational charts and internal metrics as "operational matters outside the Department's purview". By failing to mandate that corporate structures be explicitly mapped against public registers of sub-delegated authority and standardized procedural manuals, the DLGSC allows administrations like Melville's to obscure operational efficiency and staff resource allocation. By passively permitting this opacity, the DLGSC abdicates its statutory duty to enforce the true intent of the Act, reducing "good government" to a closed-loop administrative shield that excludes the community from its right to democratic oversight.

[1, 2, 3]

Library Entry 4:

Suppression of Information Flows, Executive Briefing Bias, and FOI Obstruction

4.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville operational administration systematically controls and restricts the flow of official information to insulate itself from public and democratic scrutiny. This failure occurs across two distinct pathways:

Freedom of Information (FOI) Obstruction: The City utilizes unreasonable, overly broad, and improper redactions to deny ratepayers access to key public files, while using the risk of complex escalation pathways to discourage persistent applicants.

Executive Briefing Bias: The information, reports, and options papers provided by executive management to Elected Members for statutory Council decisions are fundamentally biased. These briefings lack objective "pros and cons" analyses and are deliberately structured to block independent public engagement from altering administrative outcomes.

4.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA) – Section 4: Establishes the right of the public to obtain access to documents held by agencies, explicitly mandating that agencies must facilitate access promptly and at the lowest reasonable cost.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 5.41(b): Imposes an absolute statutory duty on the CEO to ensure that advice and information are available to the council so that "informed" decisions can be made. Providing biased, single-option briefings directly violates this requirement.

Public Sector Commission (PSC) Integrity Standards: Requires that public sector decision-making documents remain balanced, transparent, objective, and completely free from administrative steering or self-serving concealment.

4.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) WA Annual Reports: Public data trends published by the WA Information Commissioner highlight that local government agencies face recurring external review challenges when applications are subjected to excessive "Commercial-in-Confidence" or personal privacy exclusions that fail the public interest test.

AICD Governance Review (2019): This independent review specifically warned against structural information asymmetry within the City of Melville. It confirmed that Elected Members were frequently left over-reliant on heavily filtered information packages compiled exclusively by executive staff, preventing independent analysis of administrative performance.

Ordinary Council Meeting Agendas & Minutes: An audit of public Melville council agendas reveals a standard template configuration where executive recommendations are consistently presented as a singular, pre-determined path. Comprehensive multi-option matrices that include public engagement feedback are systematically omitted from ordinary business items.

4.4: Governance Impact

When an administration acts as an aggressive information gatekeeper, the democratic governing mechanism of the city breaks down. By delivering one-sided briefings that lack rigorous pros-and-cons analysis, the executive team effectively strips the elected Councillors of their legislative decision-making power.

Councillors transition from an independent board of directors into a rubber-stamping committee for administrative agendas.

Furthermore, using obstructionist FOI redactions drives up administrative overheads and internal review costs, forcing the city to burn resources defending excessive secrecy.

4.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Ratepayers are denied their fundamental democratic right to open government. A resident seeking clarity on an environmental failure or a planning anomaly is met with heavily redacted FOI documents that hide the identities of decision-makers and the true sequence of administrative events. This creates an environment of intense public distrust and eliminates any capacity for genuine community-led accountability.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This case study highlights how a local government can exploit the administrative delays within State-level review systems (like the OIC appeals process) to block timely public access to critical information. This tactical delay undermines the State-wide objective of a transparent public sector.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has failed to deliver template operational guidelines that mandate standardized "Balanced Scorecard" or comprehensive multi-option briefings for Council decision-making. Its model toolkits support standard executive summary reporting that consolidates power within the CEO's office. This failure directly violates the community participation mandates of Section 1.3(2) of the Act by reinforcing a document-delivery culture that deliberately limits public understanding of intersecting municipal rules.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: The State regulator has historically refused to intervene in biased council briefings, viewing report composition as an "internal administrative operational layout". By failing to enforce a minimum standard of balanced options reporting, the DLGSC allows local executives to control council voting blocs through information filtering. By limiting its oversight to a superficial verification of meeting agenda formats, while refusing to audit internal information management procedures and sub-delegation registers that govern how public records are redacted or withheld, the DLGSC abdicates its statutory duty. Crucially, this passivity directly aligns with the employee close proximity implications, as insular sector networks naturally protect executive information privileges over the transparency and democratic oversight rights of the community.

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Library Entry 5:

Policy Failure & Systemic Obfuscation

5.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville operational administration fails to maintain, structure, or publish its public policies in a centralized, easily navigable register. Policies operate as fragmented, standalone documents that deliberately lack cross-references to connected strategic instruments. For example, policies governing the constitution of committees are segregated from policies governing remuneration of committee members and policies governing the urban canopy—including urban trees, trees on private land, verge treatments, and other vegetated areas—are heavily segregated, preventing cohesive application. Furthermore, records of policy currency and statutory review timelines are obscured from both the public and Elected Members. This structural opacity makes it impossible for Council to perform topical comparisons prior to voting, effectively limiting community engagement and bypassing the participatory objectives mandated under the Act.

5.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 1.3(2)(b) & (c): Formally mandates that local government frameworks must ensure "greater community participation in local government" and "greater accountability of local governments to their communities". Keeping policy registers fragmented and rejecting community-designed systems directly defeats this legislative intent.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 2.7(2)(b): Expressly states that the elected Council is responsible for determining the local government's policies. When the administration organizes policies in an opaque or un-indexed manner, it interferes with the Council's capacity to exercise its statutory role.

State Records Act 2000 (WA): Mandates the maintenance of accurate, structured, and thoroughly indexed public records to ensure government transparency and ease of public access.

5.3: The Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

City of Melville Policy Portal: A structural audit of the City's online registry reveals a fragmented presentation where strategic documents are separated by artificial category walls. Rather than presenting an integrated environmental canopy framework, closely linked instruments like Verge Treatments, Urban Forest, and planning codes for private land trees are segregated, lacking explicit cross-reference links or a uniform master matrix.

2021 Weir Legal Review & Hunt Review Outcomes: Independent auditors noted that the City's historical approach to cross-directorate planning and policy development lacked a centralized architecture. This caused significant conflict when staff applied planning policies independently of engineering or environmental expectations.

Obstruction of Community-Led Solutions (2020–2026): In 2020–21, the City and its elected Council were formally provided with a drafted comprehensive system for integrated policy management (encompassing Model Local Government Framework Policies for Corporate Systems, Community Engagement, Public Relations, Governance/Enforcement, and the Environment). Rather than adopting or acknowledging this contribution, City administrators ignored the work. In 2026, administrators announced they were spending municipal resources to "re-create the wheel" by producing their own internal Policy Framework from scratch, completely bypassing the community's previous structural work.

5.4: Governance Impact

When a local government administration operates with fragmented policy architecture, the governing capability of the elected Council is severely diminished. Councillors are forced to vote on individual policy amendments in complete isolation, unaware of how a change to a streetscape or engineering directive might clash with an urban canopy or conservation target. By rejecting open-source, community-provided framework templates and choosing to reinvent them internally years later, the administration wastes operational hours and ratepayer funds to protect its monopoly on bureaucratic design, ensuring the system remains defensive and insulated from external scrutiny.

5.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Local residents face a frustrating maze when trying to verify their civic rights or responsibilities. When the community proactively designs a structural solution to fix this maze, the administration actively suppresses and ignores it. This behaviour treats engaged ratepayers as an adversarial threat rather than valued civic stakeholders, severely eroding community trust and psychological safety.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This case study demonstrates how a local government can technically fulfill the basic minimum requirement to "possess a policy register" while systematically undermining the State Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework. The IPR requires that local policies align perfectly with the overarching Community Strategic Plan. Siloing policies and blocking civic-led integration tools defeats this State-wide reform effort.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: While providing a generic suite of template policies, WALGA has failed to build or mandate an open-source, relational database template for local governments. By promoting simple PDF lists instead of an integrated, cross-referenced policy index, WALGA's standard advice supports historical practices of administrative opacity. This failure actively undermines the community participation provisions of Section 1.3(2) of the Act by reinforcing a document-delivery culture that deliberately limits public understanding of intersecting municipal rules.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: The State regulator has confined its compliance audits to verifying the existence of a policy manual, entirely ignoring the structural disconnect between the formal Policy Manual, the statutory Register of Delegations, and fragmented internal procedure registers. By refusing to establish minimum standards for searchable, relational public registers, the DLGSC permits local administrations to obscure their policy frameworks, preventing genuine accountability. By limiting its oversight to a superficial, box-ticking assessment of policy existence, the DLGSC abdicates its statutory duty, shielding executive structures from public scrutiny and stripping the community of its legislated right to direct democratic oversight.

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Library Entry 6:

Mismanagement of Disputation & Structural Weaponisation of "Unreasonable Complainant" Frameworks

6.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville operational administration maintains an adversarial, decentralized approach to community grievance management. Rather than operating a transparent, unified system to log, track, and remediate administrative errors, the City utilizes highly confrontational instruments—specifically its operational policy titled the *City of Melville Managing Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy* (and associated administrative practices) — to suppress legitimate public scrutiny. This framework lacks independent internal or external review mechanisms, allowing operational staff to act as judge, jury and executioner, effectively utilizing "unreasonable" declarations to mask administrative inaction, bypass statutory record-keeping, and avoid accountability.

6.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 5.41(b): Mandates that the CEO must ensure that advice and information are available to the council so that "informed decisions" can be made. Weaponising complainant policies restricts the flow of critical community feedback to Elected Members.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 1.3(2)(b) & (c): Outlines the intent of the Act to provide for greater community participation and more accountability of local governments to their communities. Arbitrary communication bans directly violate this statutory intent.

State Records Act 2000 (WA): Requires comprehensive and accurate capturing of all correspondence. Fragmented complaint management and the silencing of specific individuals create structural deficits in the City's official archives.

Public Sector Commission (PSC) Integrity Standards: Local governments are expected to align with State public sector principles regarding fairness, natural justice, and procedural transparency in administrative decision-making.

6.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Data)

Customer Science Complaints Review (2020): Explicitly identified that the City lacked a centralized, uniform, and visible system for managing public complaints and tracking feedback, leading to fragmented information silos across different directorates. While progress and oversight gaps regarding this were documented in the City of Melville Response to Inquiry Recommendations, no structural remediation is identifiable.

Weir Legal Review (2021): The independent evaluation conducted by Lawyer Bronwyn Weir, detailed via the City of Melville Review of Complaints (Building and Planning), highlighted significant structural friction, lack of clear procedural mediation paths, a "toxic" operational culture, and a heavy-handed legal posture where the City acted unreasonably and made mistakes.

Financial Cost Imbalance: Internal assessment and shadow profiling of public council expenditures estimate the hidden resource drain (officer hours, legal retainers, and administrative filtering) used to suppress and manage complaints costs ratepayers an unbudgeted \$6 to \$10 per capita, which is buried under general operational overheads rather than being transparently reported as a line cost item.

6.4: Governance Impact

By operating without a centralized, auditable complaint database, the executive team and Elected Members have no reliable data metrics to identify systemic operational failures. When a department continually mismanages a planning or environmental issue, the resulting community complaints are treated as isolated instances of "unreasonable customer behaviour" rather than data points of an underperforming service. This creates an inward-looking corporate culture, shields incompetent administrative practices from council oversight, and drives up external legal expenses through a reliance on adversarial prosecutions instead of early-stage mediation.

6.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Citizens are stripped of their right to natural justice. When an administrative declaration is made against a ratepayer, they face immediate civic isolation, restricted access to public facilities or staff, and are denied any formal, transparent pathway to appeal or review the decision. This erodes psychological safety for residents challenging municipal errors.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This case demonstrates how a local government can exploit gaps in State guidelines to create a "closed loop" of administrative power, effectively neutralizing the democratic oversight role of Elected Members by controlling what information and which people are allowed to access the council.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has historically provided generic, risk-averse "Model Complainant Policies" to councils. These templates prioritize protecting administrative comfort over upholding strict procedural fairness or mandating independent review mechanisms. By designing frameworks that exclude community input and appeal paths, WALGA's model policies actively undermine the community participation mandates of Section 1.3(2) of the Act.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: Despite repeated community notifications and clear red flags raised in the DLGSC Authorised Inquiry into the City of Melville, this State regulator has failed to audit the application of these restrictive policies sector-wide, completely ignoring how the absence of centralized complaint procedure registers and documented employee handling workflows enables arbitrary administrative blacklisting without formal right of appeal. By taking a passive stance and treating these as "internal operational matters," the DLGSC fails its own statutory duty to enforce the Act's intent. It reduces "good government" to mere administrative compliance, completely ignoring the community's legislated right to democratic engagement and oversight.

[1, 2, 3]

Library Entry 7:

Administrative Intimidation, Coercion, and Insulated Conduct

7.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville operational administration employs methods of physical, spatial, and cultural intimidation to assert control over the democratic functions of the local government through two distinct dimensions:

Spatial Intimidation of Elected Members: The physical configuration of the Council Chambers and elector meetings deliberately seats executive and administrative staff in prominent, elevated, or overlooking positions relative to the elected Council in session, acting as a visual and psychological tool of coercion. Furthermore, the administration enforces a non-standard protocol where operational staff remain permanently present throughout the entirety of Council and Elector debates. In an open democratic system, administrative staff should not be present within the formal meeting arena unless specifically requested by the Chair to deliver technical information, and they should immediately withdraw upon the conclusion of their evidence to safeguard the independence of the voting body. Compounding this institutional creep is the unlawful practice where the Presiding Officer routinely redirects public questions put to the Council onto a staff member. The *Local Government Act 1995* (WA) prescribes no authority or inherent right of speech to administrative staff within these sessions; bypassing the elected body in this manner unlawfully elevates unelected employees into the democratic decision-making arena.

Insulation and Protection of Abusive Conduct: The executive leadership actively shields, defends, and maintains the employment of administrative staff members who engage in bullying, aggressive, or dismissive conduct toward ratepayers and community members. This systemic insulation institutionalizes a lack of personal accountability, allowing public-facing staff to mistreat critics without fear of internal disciplinary action.

7.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 2.7 & 2.8: Dictates that the Council and Mayor govern the local government's affairs. Any physical or spatial mechanism designed to project administrative oversight or pressure over Councillors during active debate violates the statutory separation of powers between governance and operations.

Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021: Prescribes mandatory behaviour frameworks requiring all local government employees to act with integrity, show respect for others, and maintain professional relationships free from intimidation or bullying.

Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA) – Section 28: Places a duty on workers and management to ensure their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others. Using physical space to apply psychological pressure or allowing staff to act aggressively creates an unaddressed psychosocial hazard.

7.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

Chamber Layout and Meeting Recording Audits: A physical and visual analysis of the City of Melville Council Chambers and Meeting Procedures confirms a chamber geography where the executive tier is situated to physically oversee and shadow the seating block of Elected Members. This configuration contrasts with parliamentary and democratic models where the administrative staff are strictly segregated to a supportive, non-dominant gallery position.

DLGSC Authorised Inquiry Report (2019): Officially documented a deeply defensive and controlling operational culture within the Melville executive team. The State inquiry highlighted a historical pattern where the administration reacted aggressively to public criticism, treating external resident questioning as an organizational threat to be contained rather than a legitimate civic check.

Community Grievance Registers and Public Question Time: Official minutes across multiple cycles document recurring ratepayer complaints regarding aggressive, dismissive, and defensive behaviour from specific administrative departments. The public record shows that the executive leadership routinely responds to these behavioural complaints by issuing blanket administrative defences of staff, completely bypassing independent code of conduct reviews.

7.4: Governance Impact

When an administration uses spatial intimidation, permanent meeting presence, and the unauthorized redirection of public questions to influence Elected Members, it neutralizes the democratic checks and balances of local government. Allowing uninvited operational staff to sit through entire political debates permits the bureaucracy to visually monitor and shadow the voting behaviour of individual Councillors, creating a psychological barrier to independent choice. By permitting the Presiding Officer to shield Councillors from public scrutiny by forcing staff members to answer political questions, the administration actively causes the elected body to abdicate its governance responsibilities. Councillors transition from active, informed community representatives into insulated spectators who rely entirely on pre-filtered administrative narratives, neutralizing their capability to perform their oversight duties effectively.

7.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Citizens face a combative municipal apparatus. When a ratepayer encounters aggressive behaviour from a staff member—whether in a planning dispute or a public meeting—they find that any formal complaint is immediately buried or rejected by the executive team. This total lack of internal accountability leaves residents feeling helpless, intimidated, and unsafe when attempting to engage with their own local government.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This case demonstrates how a local government can technically implement a mandated Code of Conduct while completely subverting its spirit. By running an insulated system that protects staff from external scrutiny, the administration actively undermines the State Government's objective to build an open, accountable public sector across Western Australia.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has consistently failed to produce chamber design codes or meeting templates that enforce a strict, submissive physical placement for administrative staff. By staying silent on the psychology of chamber geography, WALGA's models allow aggressive administrations to maintain coercive physical environments. This framework directly violates the community participation mandates of Section 1.3(2) of the Act by actively supplying the procedural and structural mechanisms used to suppress public democratic participation.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: Despite receiving numerous direct complaints regarding administrative intimidation and the suppression of behavioural reviews, the State regulator has consistently refused to intervene, categorizing chamber layouts and human resource disciplinary choices as "internal operational matters". By limiting its oversight to a superficial, box-ticking assessment of local procedures, the DLGSC abdicates its statutory duty. Crucially, this passive stance adds significant weight to the earlier employee close proximity implications. Because the oversight investigators and the municipal executives belong to the same professional networks, the State system exhibits a protective institutional bias that shields administrative authority from community-led accountability, actively denying the community its legislated right to direct democratic oversight.

[1, 2, 3]

Library Entry 8:

Community Exclusion & Mismanagement of Section 1.3(2) Engagements

8.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville operational administration demonstrates a pattern of mismanaging public resources by prioritizing high-visibility, superficial recreational programming and civic entertainment over critical structural governance reforms. Concurrently, the administration employs highly restrictive consultation mechanisms that actively discourage, limit, or exclude ratepayers from meaningful participation in the City's statutory decisions and democratic affairs. By treating citizen input and community-led scrutiny as an adversarial pressure to be risk-managed rather than a core legislative objective, the administration isolates itself from community oversight, failing to deliver the transparent and collaborative governance required by law.

8.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 1.3(2): Explicitly states the intent of the Act to result in better decision-making, greater community participation, and greater accountability of local governments to their communities.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 5.27 & 5.28: Prescribes the mandatory statutory avenues for electors to command public accountability via the Annual General Meeting of Electors and Special Meetings of Electors.

Public Sector Commission (PSC) Openness Principles: Requires public sector entities to operate transparently and treat community feedback as an essential input for continuous service improvement, rather than a disruption to be managed.

8.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

DLGSC Authorised Inquiry Report (2019): Documented systemic failures in the City's historical public consultation processes. The report confirmed that the administration routinely used tight information controls to manage community resistance and isolate critics, rather than genuinely expanding civic participation under Section 1.3(2).

City of Melville AGME Restrictions: An analysis of the City of Melville Annual General Meeting of Electors Notification reveals an administrative practice of enforcing tight restrictions on democratic assemblies. Ratepayers were met with mandatory pre-registration barriers, room capacity caps that limited in-person access, and strict 5:00 PM deadlines for submitting public questions up to five days in advance, directly limiting spontaneous, democratic community cross-examination of the City's annual performance.

Misdirection of Civic Resources: A review of the City's public schedules shows a heavy emphasis on community activation events, such as Melville Summer Music. While these events are valuable, they are heavily funded and prioritized by the administration while core structural deficits—such as policy siloes, contaminated site remediation, and unaddressed psychosocial workplace hazards—are deferred or left un-budgeted.

8.4: Governance Impact

When an administration replaces statutory civic engagement with superficial social programming, it degrades the quality of its municipal decision-making. High-visibility events create a false appearance of community alignment while masking deep, unaddressed operational flaws from the elected Council. By restricting access to elector meetings, the executive team blocks raw, unfiltered community feedback and asset failure data from reaching Councillors. This leaves Elected Members reliant on sanitized internal reporting, neutralizing their capability to perform their oversight duties effectively.

8.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Engaged ratepayers are marginalized and excluded from the civic process. Residents who attempt to address Council on substantive issues, such as environmental neglect or planning inconsistencies, find themselves restricted by procedural hurdles, room closures, and rigid deadlines. This dynamic breeds profound community cynicism, erodes psychological safety for local whistleblowers, and alienates the very volunteers and community groups the City is statutorily required to support.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This case demonstrates a broader sector issue: the exploitation of local government procedures to defeat the purpose of the WA Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework. The IPR mandates that community engagement must drive the Strategic Community Plan. By controlling the engagement process, the administration isolates itself from genuine accountability, setting a poor example that undermines State-wide transparency initiatives.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has consistently failed to advocate for or build open-access model codes that safeguard public speech and guarantee unrestricted question times at elector meetings. WALGA's generic templates focus heavily on risk management and keeping meetings orderly, providing councils with the exact procedural tools used to minimize public participation. This framework directly violates the community participation mandates of Section 1.3(2) of the Act by actively supplying the procedural mechanisms used to suppress democratic public cross-examination.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: Despite witnessing the regular scheduling of Special Meetings of Electors and receiving persistent complaints regarding Melville's restrictive meeting controls, the State regulator has taken a passive stance. By treating these restrictions as "local procedural choices" rather than a systematic attack on Section 1.3(2) rights, the DLGSC allows the administration to undermine the democratic intent of the Act. The regulator routinely rubber-stamps procedural compliance at elector meetings without ever auditing whether the administrative systems and internal registers governing public question intake are structured to facilitate or actively suppress civic scrutiny. Crucially, this regulatory passivity adds significant weight to the earlier employee close proximity implications. Because regulators and municipal executives are drawn from the same closed professional pool, there is an institutional bias toward protecting administrative convenience over defending the statutory rights of the community. By passively permitting these restrictions, the DLGSC abdicates its statutory duty, allowing local administrations to use procedural walls to shield themselves from public scrutiny and strip the community of its legislated right to direct democratic oversight.

[1, 2, 3, 4]

Library Entry 9:

Prejudicial Enforcement in Planning and Building Matters & Mismanagement of Disputation

9.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville operational administration demonstrates a pattern of prejudicial and biased application of rules, standards, and laws, particularly within its planning and building compliance frameworks. Rather than enforcing regulatory codes equitably, the administration applies standards selectively, leaving some ratepayers facing aggressive compliance actions while other significant planning breaches are ignored or insulated from enforcement. This structural bias is protected by a refusal to utilize independent mediation for conflict resolution. Instead, the administration relies on high-cost external legal consultants and punitive prosecutions to bully, intimidate, and financially exhaust community members who flag municipal errors or non-compliance.

9.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 3.1: Establishes that the general function of a local government is to provide for the good government of persons in its district. Biased enforcement and the weaponisation of legal resources violate the requirement of good governance.

Planning and Development Act 2005 (WA) – Part 13: Outlines the enforcement powers given to local governments to police local planning schemes. These powers are granted to protect community standards and must be executed in accordance with principles of equity, administrative fairness, and natural justice.

Building Act 2011 (WA): Mandates that local government permit authorities enforce building standards uniformly to protect public safety and amenity, leaving no lawful room for arbitrary or preferential administrative exemptions.

9.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

Weir Legal Review (2021): The independent evaluation conducted by Bronwyn Weir, titled Review of Complaints (Building and Planning), explicitly documented significant structural deficiencies, delays, and mistakes in how the City managed planning and building disputation. The report highlighted a heavy-handed, combative legal posture where the administration acted unreasonably, causing unnecessary friction with the community.

DLGSC Authorised Inquiry Report (2019): Confirmed a history of disproportionate administrative actions and selective application of enforcement measures. The State inquiry detailed instances where the City bypassed internal procedures, resulting in unreasonable restrictions and an over-reliance on aggressive legal posturing rather than early-stage dispute resolution.

Misuse of Public Funds for Legal Retainers: A review of public council expenditures reveals that the administration consistently utilizes expensive external legal panel consultants to handle building and planning disputes. The costs associated with these ad-hoc legal prosecutions and structural filtering mechanisms are estimated to cost ratepayers between $6 and $10 per capita, buried under general corporate overheads to obscure the financial scale of municipal litigation from public scrutiny.

9.4: Governance Impact

By substituting independent mediation with aggressive, adversarial legal action, the executive administration inflicts severe financial harm on the municipality. Choosing to litigate rather than mediate drives up external legal expenses, draining funds that should be directed into public infrastructure. Furthermore, because these disputes are handled via closed administrative processes or handled by external legal retainers, the elected Council is kept in the dark regarding recurring regulatory errors. This prevents Councillors from identifying systemic operational vulnerabilities within the Planning and Building Directorate, leaving the city exposed to long-term liability.

9.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Ratepayers are denied a level playing field. A resident attempting to navigate planning laws faces a complex, un-mediated bureaucracy that applies rules punitively against individual homeowners while seemingly ignoring significant compliance breaches by favoured entities. When residents speak up, they face the full financial weight of the City's legal machinery, resulting in severe psychological distress, civic isolation, and financial exhaustion for families trying to protect their properties.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This case study highlights how a metropolitan local government can exploit regulatory gaps to run a closed system of planning enforcement, neutralizing the democratic oversight role of Elected Members. It actively undermines the State Government's *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*, which demand transparency and consistency across the sector.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has failed to provide member councils with standard, mandatory frameworks that require early-stage independent mediation for planning and building disputes. By defaulting to generic legal panels, WALGA's models support an expensive, litigation-first environment that protects administrative decisions from objective third-party review. This framework directly violates the community participation mandates of Section 1.3(2) of the Act by actively supporting a corporate environment that weaponizes litigation to suppress public scrutiny and participation.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: Despite receiving numerous detailed community notifications and witnessing the damning findings of the 2019 DLGSC Inquiry and 2021 Weir Legal reviews, this State regulator has consistently failed to audit Melville's selective compliance practices. By treating these structural enforcement biases as "isolated operational matters," the DLGSC permits the City to maintain an uneven regulatory environment without consequence. This systemic failure is directly enabled by the DLGSC's refusal to audit the internal operational procedure manuals used by municipal enforcement officers, which allows broad sub-delegations of coercive planning and building powers to be executed arbitrarily against ratepayers without an independent State check on operational uniformity. Crucially, this regulatory passivity adds significant weight to the earlier employee close proximity implications identified in Entry 3. Because the personnel operating within the State oversight agencies, recruitment firms, and municipal executive teams are drawn from the same recycled, insular professional pool, there is a structural disincentive for State regulators to aggressively police local administrative failures. This close professional proximity fosters a protective industry culture that prioritizes executive insulation over public accountability, actively abdicating its statutory duty to enforce the true intent of the Act, and stripping the community of its legislated right to direct democratic oversight.

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Library Entry 10:

Environmental Mismanagement, Regulatory Delays, and the Marginalisation of Community Volunteers

10.1: Core Grievance

The City of Melville operational administration demonstrates a long-term failure to execute environmental rehabilitation and transparent data monitoring over contaminated public spaces. For over two decades, the City has mismanaged the containment and remediation of the former Dundee Road Landfill at John Connell Reserve. This failure is exacerbated by an operational practice of storing waste and infrastructure materials on contaminated soils with deficient topsoil caps. Furthermore, the City does not publish an open, interactive classification matrix or functional metric registry of its public spaces, which obscures land-use risks from ratepayers. Compounding this operational neglect is a documented pattern of exclusionary administrative behaviour that discourages, fails to coordinate, and marginalises local "Friends of" volunteer conservation groups, thereby suppressing the community engagement mandated under State guidelines.

10.2: Statutory & Regulatory Triggers

Contaminated Sites Act 2003 (WA): Establishes the clear statutory obligation for landowners and local government management bodies to report, thoroughly investigate, and actively remediate land legally designated as contaminated.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 1.3(2)(b): Formally mandates that local government frameworks must ensure "greater community participation" in municipal outcomes. Defeating or discouraging organized local conservation volunteer efforts violates this statutory intent.

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) – Section 5.41(g): Prescribes that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must manage the day-to-day operations of the local government efficiently. Allowing operational infrastructure to languish without the execution of approved master plans or remediation milestones represents an organizational failure under this function.

10.3: Evidence Base (Triangulated Public Data)

DWER Contaminated Sites Classification (2013–Present): Official public regulatory notices from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) confirm that the former Dundee Road Landfill site within John Connell Reserve was formally classified as "Contaminated – Remediation Required" in 2013. The State registry highlights that the ground contains domestic waste, heavy metals, and asbestos-containing materials (ACM) beneath a highly degraded soil cap measuring under 50cm to non-existent in areas.

John Connell Reserve Master Plan & Field Extension Delays: Publicly published chronologies on Melville Talks reveal that despite initial concepts being approved over a decade ago (including a highly controversial 2014 proposal to fund remediation via property sales), the executive administration has continuously delayed field execution. Tensions peaked in mid-2026, forcing a formal Special Meeting of Electors on 23 June 2026 where ratepayers overwhelmingly carried a vote of instruction forcing the City to alter its indicative delivery timeframes and stop administrative procrastination.

Health Assessment Rejection (December 2025): As documented in the public City of Melville Ordinary Council Minutes, the administration actively pushed back against executing independent health risk assessments for local sports clubs playing directly adjacent to the un-remediated, thin-capped tip boundary, citing cost concerns.

Absence of Public Space Metrics: An analysis of the City's open-access public assets confirms that no transparent, real-time interactive mapping database is provided to ratepayers that cross-references land use classifications with historical contamination data or remediation progress statuses.

10.4: Governance Impact

By treating contaminated sites as long-term liabilities to be managed through administrative delay rather than execution, the City's executive arm creates significant financial and environmental exposures. When the administration continues to store operational municipal materials (such as pipes, soil, and rocks) on thin-capped, asbestos-affected grounds, they risk further disrupting the topsoil barrier and compounding cleanup costs. Furthermore, by choosing to marginalise and disconnect from "Friends of" volunteer conservation networks, the administration loses free community labour and localized ecological expertise. This forces a reliance on expensive external environmental consultants and corporate contractors, draining municipal funds to cover avoidable operational outlays.

10.5: Impact on Community, State System, & Regulatory Integrity

Community Impact: Ratepayers and local families are subjected to systemic transparency failures regarding their immediate physical environment. For over twenty years, residents have had to fight to protect nearby spaces (like Ken Hurst Park) and force basic field leveling at John Connell Reserve. Local environmental volunteers—who dedicate personal hours to weeding, planting, and guarding urban canopies—are treated by the administration as adversarial pressure groups rather than valued civic stakeholders, severely eroding community trust and psychological safety.

Sector & State Systemic Impact: This case study highlights a critical gap in the enforcement mechanics of the WA Contaminated Sites Framework. It demonstrates that a metropolitan local government can hold a State-issued 21-year land management order for recreation purposes, receive a formal "Remediation Required" notice from DWER, and then successfully evade substantive cleanup milestones for over 13 years through rolling bureaucratic cycles.

Environment Cost: In wiping an irreplaceable natural asset entirely off its civic balance sheet, ratepayers lose an Asset valued at around $2.4 million and inherit an offset cost of $1.3 million to then spend $4.68 Million on an ongoing operational maintenance cost estimated at between $40,000 and $60,000 annually. This is further exacerbated by maintenance of a liability for remediating closed landfill.

Institutional Performance Assessment:

WALGA: Has failed to provide its member councils with standardized, open-access frameworks that integrate volunteer groups directly into municipal environmental decision-making. By remaining silent on model guidelines for long-term landfill liability registries, WALGA leaves individual administrations to manage contaminated land risks in total isolation from the public. This omission directly undermines the community participation provisions of Section 1.3(2) of the Act by providing templates that enable local councils to lock out grassroots environmental networks.

DLGSC / Inspectorate: Despite receiving repeated public complaints and witnessing a formal Special Meeting of Electors over the administration's inaction, the State regulator has consistently failed to perform a cross-agency compliance audit alongside DWER. By ignoring the intersection of environmental neglect and municipal administrative failure, the DLGSC allows the City of Melville to continuously defer its statutory care obligations without consequence. By passively treating these systemic delays as a minor operational asset issue, the DLGSC abdicates its statutory duty under the Act, replacing active community-led transparency with an insular regulatory shield that denies ratepayers their democratic right to oversight.

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