



3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020

## **No protections for ratepayers in new Local Government Bill**

We have written to the Members of Parliament in the Upper House of the State Parliament who are scheduled on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February to vote on the proposed Local Government Bill, 2019. We have implored MPs not to approve the Bill because the Bill does not afford protections to ratepayers.

We are concerned the Bill does not address the findings of The Victorian Auditor General, The Local Government Inspectorate, The Ombudsman and we cannot understand why the Senate is considering passing the Bill prior to the release of the current IBAC investigations.

These reports demonstrate a systemic failure in local government and a completely broken system. We believe the Victorian Government must define the roles and responsibilities of Councils. Without a clear definition, Councils are free to waste ratepayer revenues on any services they want. Also, there are serious systemic issues of conflict of interest, prejudiced decision making, lobbying, coercion, illegal spending and waste that underly an industry swamped with poor governance. Furthermore, consumers are exposed and unprotected more than ever by an industry that seeks to wrap itself in more protectionist ideology.

The Local Government Bill seeks to silence any ratepaying consumer who runs into a problem with their local council. It enshrines the council to be able to:

- Defend any and all decisions it makes at any cost
- Refuse to explain or produce any evidence that underlies a decision
- Refuse to hold itself accountable to any set of governance standards
- Refuse to hold itself accountable to any performance measures; and
- Seeks to remove any community satisfaction or performance measure as a requirement for any funding

Local Government has become an introspective, self-absorbed enigma that ratepayers no longer have trust in. This is your opportunity to help stop the Local Government Bill. Ratepayers deserve better.

## **WE MUST ACT NOW TO STOP THIS BILL IN ITS TRACKS**

Please help us by writing emails and calling as many of the following upper house members as possible IMMEDIATELY

The only way to send a loud message is to INUNDATE them without delay. Emails, Calls nonstop and NOW.

What are the 5 main points we need them to understand?

1. **It's irresponsible of the government to try and pass this bill UNTIL THE FINDINGS OF IBAC ARE RELEASED**
2. **The bill does nothing to improve transparency to ratepayers who fund the \$10 Billion in revenues each year**
3. **The bill fails to address the poor culture in Local Government**
4. **The bill fails to address the power imbalance between Councillors and CEO's**
5. **The bill does NOTHING to protect ratepayers' rights**

Here's how you can help:

1. **Write to each minister Separately - take the points above and write an email demanding the Bill be abandoned**
2. **Start Calling the offices of the MP's and speak to their staff and advisors about the Bill being a SHAM - it does nothing for ratepayers**
3. **Send this email to anyone you know who is happy to help and encourage them to do the same**

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