

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT — REFORMS

Petition

The PRESIDENT: I call Hon Neil Thomson—who is not here. I was looking for him. Let us try Hon Tjorn Sibma. Thank you for standing!

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [2.05 pm]: A concerning moment of confused identity, President!

I present an e-petition containing 1 017 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

...

We the undersigned are opposed to the process by which the State Government is working to amend the Local Government Act 1995 with a series of proposed reforms. We do not believe that the present Local Government Reforms process upholds the intent of the Local Government Act 1995 of better decision making, greater community participation, greater accountability and more efficient and effective Local Government that is representative of the needs of current and future generations. It is our experience that there has been insufficient effort to properly inform the community of the meaning and implications of these proposed reforms. It is also our experience that Local Government Authorities have not provided their Ratepayers and the wider community with an opportunity to be meaningfully engaged in the reform process. The level ... of Community Engagement in the Local Government Reform process only serves to justify our belief that local government is not proving itself to be 'closest to the community and best able to identify community needs'.

We therefore ask the Legislative Council to recommend that the Government ensures the current process to amend the Local Government Act 1995 is discarded and a new process is carried out that requires:

- That the State government provide a comprehensive report on the detail of the proposed reforms, their intended outcomes, and their implications. In addition, this report to include what alternative approaches were considered including the pros and cons of each option and why they were not adopted.
- The above information is to be clearly conveyed to the wider community by way of all Local Governments delivering community engagement workshops in their districts.
- All Local Governments are to record the community engagement outcomes and endorse a report (to the Government) on community support, concerns and reform proposals in a measurable manner, relevant to reforming the Local Government Act 1995 for the purpose of informing a Local Government Act Amendment Green Bill
- The WA State Government tables in Parliament, a Local Government Act Amendment Green Bill for public consultation based on empowering and protecting Local Government Elected Members to perform their constitutional role of representing persons of local government Districts without fear or favour in a workplace that is safe and supportive.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

This is being presented on behalf of the West Australian Residents and Ratepayers Association Incorporated, WARRA.

[See paper 1457.]