

Petition No. 013 – Outsourcing Commonwealth Home Care Support Program in Kalgoorlie – Submission

As a self-funded retiree and long-term resident of Kalgoorlie-Boulder I am deeply concerned with the agenda and direction this current Kalgoorlie-Boulder City Council is pursuing. At the council meeting held on 27/1/2021 an agenda item titled (confidential item) was tabled Re: Commonwealth Home Care Support Program. On the advice and recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer, John Walker, the motion to exit the Commonwealth Home Care Support Program was unanimously passed by the council. Regrettably, this rushed motion was passed without due consideration to the negative implications of such a sensitive issue.

It is outrageous that the most vulnerable sector of our community is being threatened by the privatisation of meal services. Amana's proposed alternative will involve meals being prepared in Perth, rather than fresh onsite in Kalgoorlie as is currently the case and transported up in a chilled van. Currently seniors are offered a three-course sit-down meal at the Community Centre complete with real plates and cutlery and it is a great atmosphere for seniors to come together and share a meal. When Amana takes over from the 1st of July 2021, this is due to change to a two-course meal heated up and served in the packaging it was transported in. I feel this will negatively impact the morale and "home-cooked" feel of sharing a meal together.

It is inconceivable that such a policy change from the local council is destroying a locally prepared quality and nutritious meal source which creates employment, supports local businesses and creates a positive environment for the elderly and disabled.

Historically council has a responsibility to operate and maintain core essential services. Since the appointment of the current CEO, he has pursued an agenda of cost cutting and economic rationalisation. Library services have been reduced and the standard of the Ray Finlayson Sporting Complex has been continuously neglected, without an appropriate solution. Now the disability and senior sector of the community is being attacked.

Instead of addressing these core services, council has prioritised infrastructure projects. The golf course subsidy, paid by the local council, currently stands at a figure between \$500 000 and \$800 000 per year and this out of touch council has no objection to providing this ongoing financial support that benefits a small minority of Kalgoorlie-Boulder residents.

Further, in April 2021, the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder council conveniently announces they will be exiting the Commonwealth Home Care Support Program and Meals on Wheels services and outsourcing to a private company, namely Amana Living. This announcement, although decided on in January, was not announced by council until three months later in what I feel was a deliberate attempt to sweep under the rug the unrest this announcement would undoubtedly cause in the community. I am appalled at the lack of transparency and timing of such an announcement, simply the community was not consulted or invited to contribute submissions on such a vexed issue.

Sincerely,

David Oates

28/06/2021